CANUCK HOUSEWIVES

'WE MAY HAVE MORE GLAMOROUS STYLES, BUT DEEP DOWN INSIDE WE'RE JUST NORMAL PEOPLE LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE' PAGE 17

SASKATOON metro

Monday, April 2, 2012

News worth sharing.

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The Sheepdogs, Ewan Currie, left, Ryan Gullen, Leot Hanson and Sam Corbett in an exclusive photo for Metro. DAVE STARRETT/FOR METRO

Junos cap big year for The Sheepdogs

Right on. Trio of awards for Saskatoon foursome

Apparently The Sheepdogs hit all the right notes with I Don't Know — the song won single of the year at the Juno Awards on Sunday night.

The shaggy rockers also won new group of the year and rock album of the year the previous night for their sound, which guitarist and singer Leot Hanson describes as "whiskey brawling rock and roll twang" in an exclusive interview with Metro.

However, the group was not in Ottawa to pick up the hardware. They're in Australia touring with John Fogerty.

Before leaving, they shared some thoughts on their hometown — from their favourite drinking and eating spots, to what they miss most about Saskatoon when they're on the road. **METRO**

MORE SHEEPDOGS, PAGES 6 AND 7.
MORE JUNOS, PAGES 16.

Lobbying at midnight for 'Jimmy's Law'

MLA, radio personality seek support for bill to protect overnight workers PAGE 4

World unites to help rebels

More than 70 countries pledge to send millions of dollars and communications equipment to Syria's opposition groups PAGE 10

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City's power usage goes up during Earth Hour

On the rise. SaskPower says power usage will continue to increase as population grows

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As households across Canada powered down to take part in Earth Hour on Saturday, Saskatoon was a bright exception as the amount of energy used increased compared to 2011.

"It went up about five per cent year-over-year," said Shawn Silzer, media spokesman for SaskPower. "Across the province it went up around 10 per cent and in Regina it went down about five per cent."

Silzer said the cause of increased power usage during Earth Hour, between 8:30 and 9:30 p.m., is hard to narrow down because a number of factors come into play.

"There's not really any one factor that we could attribute it to," he said. "In fact, we've been seeing the electrical use in the province steadily increase, simply because the province's population is increasing."

The fact that people have more electronics within their household could also contribute to the increase, he said.

"There are more televisions, more laptop computers and more smartphones," Silzer said. "Our attempt in supporting Earth Hour is to help raise awareness of the options that people have that are pretty easy and economical to reduce their power."

Silzer said SaskPower tries to encourage similar practices all year.

"Hopefully, if they do it for an hour, they'll see how easy it is and they may adopt those changes more regularly into their life," he said. "It's a great opportunity to promote that message, but for us, promoting energy conservation is something we want to do with our customers 365 days a year."

Future goal

A release from SaskPower said the company wants to reduce customer demand for electricity by 100 megawatts by 2017.

Mayor Atchison welcomes Metro to Saskatoon

Mayor Donald Atchison stands with Steve Shrout, Metro's vice-president and group publisher for Western Canada, outside Saskatoon City Hall. "The launch of a new business venture is a welcome addition to our community and an indication of our city's continued growth and prosperity," Atchison said. "By offering a print edition, website and mobile news apps, Metro is sure to attract many readers in our community." Metro publishes Monday to Friday, and is always available at metronews.ca. Look for us on Facebook and Twitter @metrosaskatoon. OWEN WOYTOWICH/FOR METRO

April Fool's. Wildrose Alliance eyes 'Saskberta' merger as part of prank

Proud Saskbertans will soon be rooting for their new province's third NHL team — the Grain Elevators — if the leader of Alberta's Wildrose party has her way.

Danielle Smith announced Sunday morning she will begin negotiations to merge Alberta and Saskatchewan if she is elected.

"Alberta and Saskatchewan are both blessed with abundant natural resources, which is clearly an area we can better pursue as a single province," Smith said in a press release issued on April Fool's Day. "We also have a shared commitment to eliminate pirate activity on the North Saskatchewan River."

Faux press release

The Alberta political party says it now stands for 'cuddling small animals, drawing pictures with children, loving cake, and provocative public transport.'

Saskberta's capital would be Lloydminster, renamed Regimonton. Saskatchewan would not only give current-day Alberta deep-water port access — but also expanded space for parking, she said.

Smith would like to see Saskberta get a third NHL team to ease any tension that arises because Saskatchewan doesn't have one — something Premier Brad Wall didn't take too kindly to.

"Some of us think you might still be looking for a professional hockey team," he tweeted, adding the hashtag #justlostflamesoilersfanvotes.

He also tweeted about how Sir Wilfred Laurier, fearing the influence of a strong province in the west, split the two provinces up.

JESSICA SMITH/METRO

Machete attacks. Three in stable condition after separate assaults

Saskatoon Police Service were called to St. Paul's hospital at about 1:30 a.m. Saturday after three males, 15, 46 and 51, admitted themselves to hospital as victims of three separate assaults.

Police say injuries to all three were caused by what was believed to be a machete and the investigation is still ongoing.

The three assaults occurred in different locations around 21st Street West and Avenue R North, and victims told police they were attacked by a small group of males.

A release from police said the victims were treated in hospital and, as of Saturday morning, were in stable condition.

METRO

Crime Stoppers

Anyone with knowledge of these assaults is asked to call the Saskatoon Police Service at 975-8300 or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477.

1 NEWS

On the web

Check out our new website

Metro is thrilled to launch our new website with a reimagined, cleaner design and more content, including more special features, from our team across the country. In addition to the many changes at metronews.ca, we've launched sleek new native apps for iPhone, iPad and Android. Be sure to download them and then head to metronews.ca.

Mobile news

Provocative new research might help explain why black women are more likely than white women to develop and die from cervical cancer. Scan the code for the story

Forbes burning midnight oil to promote 'Jimmy's Law'

Protecting workers. Reporter Jessica Smith rides along with an MLA and a Yorkton radio personality on a late-night tour of Saskatoon's gas stations and convenience stores

JESSICA SMITH
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Etheline "Mouse" Tom works behind the bulletproof glass at the Firecreek Gas & Grill on 20th Street West and normally wouldn't open the door for anyone — but she makes an exception late Thursday night when her MLA comes calling.

Saskatoon Centre representative David Forbes and Yorkton radio personality Aaron Nagy are touring city gas stations and convenience stores in the middle of the night. Instead of filling up or buying snacks, they're talking to workers about Jimmy Wiebe, who was shot and killed at a gas station in Yorkton, and their plan for "Jimmy's Law."

"It's a common-sense kind of law," says Nagy, who has launched a petition asking for protection for overnight workers after his friend Jimmy was killed.

Forbes, the NDP labour critic, was inspired to write a private member's bill that, if passed, will require gas stations and convenience stores to keep at least two people on duty between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. Either that, or they will have to install a barrier between clerks and customers.

Firecreek already complies with the proposed Jimmy's Law, Etheline Tom says.

The pumps take prepayment at night and overnight employees sell food, cigarettes and lottery tickets through a small metal door built into the wall of the brick building.

"It's worth it," she says.

Tom says other gas stations in the area have been robbed, but Firecreek has been spared major problems.

What makes her feel safe?

"Being locked in here," she says.

Not everyone Nagy and Forbes visits is sympathetic. One convenience-store clerk, who asked not to be identified, says he doesn't feel at risk working alone, without a barrier, because he can keep the store door locked and let in only customers he trusts. If he's robbed, it's his own fault, he said.

When told what happened to Jimmy Wiebe, he asks, "What happened, did he refuse to give over the cash?"

Saskatoon Centre MLA David Forbes speaks to Etheline Tom at the Firecreek Gas & Grill on 20th Street West on Thursday night as another clerk works from behind protective glass. JESSICA SMITH/METRO

In fact, Wiebe didn't have a chance to refuse or say anything at all before he was shot, according to a statement from Kyle Furness, who pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in Wiebe's death.

The government already is working on changes to the labour code and Forbes is set to meet with Labour Minister Don Morgan on Thursday.

Morgan addressed Jimmy's Law in the Legislature on Thursday, and said government doesn't view the requirement of having two workers on as "viable or particularly beneficial" but is looking at other safety options, including "lighting, minimum amounts of cash, protective barriers, locking systems, appropriate security systems."

Attendants recount two violent holdups in past month

Darren Kaytor, left, and Matt Marinelli, centre, speak to Saskatoon Centre MLA David Forbes at the Fas Gas on 20th Street West on Thursday night. JESSICA SMITH/METRO

Down 20th Street from the Firecreek, Darren Kaytor and Matt Marinelli are working at the Fas Gas, and they tell Nagy and Forbes they've been robbed in two separate holdups this month.

Kaytor was working as a gas jockey two weeks ago and watched as a man armed with a shotgun held up the cashier.

"I seen him pump that shotgun and it's one of the worst experiences I've had in my life," he says.

It was all over in about 45 seconds.

"I froze in place until he was running back out the door," he says. "My cashier quit the night of the robbery. He's never come back."

Having two people on duty didn't stop the robbery that night, but knowing Marinelli works with him is one of the reasons he was able to return to work, Kaytor says.

"Survival of the fittest," he adds.

Marinelli was held up by two men waving box cutters.

"Two guys came in and one jumped on the counter. He had the cashier and told him to do that cash thing," he says. "The other guy had a Rubbermaid container and basically told me to fill it with smokes. They were gone a minute or so later with whatever we could put in there."

Kaytor says the station owners are considering adding a locking system to the door and using only prepayment at the pumps. After learning about the barrier system at the Firecreek, Forbes says that's what he'd like to see.

JESSICA SMITH/METRO

Remembering Jimmy

An Eskimos fan who loved a good laugh

Jimmy Wiebe was shot twice in the head at the Shell Station in central Yorkton last June. He worked alone and his body was found by a customer at 5 a.m., hours after he was shot.

Sitting at the Tim Hortons on 22nd Street before heading out on a midnight tour of Saskatoon on Thursday, Aaron Nagy talks about his friend.

"He was one of those people — people in Yorkton would go to the gas station just to talk with him," he says.

Nagy is a Riders fan. Wiebe loved the Eskimos. And yet, friendship and a shared sense of humour prevailed.

Smiling, Nagy tells a story about getting a call while at work at a Yorkton radio station from a sexy-voiced fan named "Tina," who asked him out on a date.

He says Wiebe hung out with him as he eagerly waited to meet the mysterious woman, teased him about being stood up and, when she didn't show, put on that same sexy voice and asked, "Did Tina sound like this?"

Nagy says his friend was shot over $40 and some cigarettes.

"It's a shame that a life comes down to that," Nagy says.

Kyle Furness, who pleaded guilty to second-degree murder, confessed that the money was for drugs.

Now Nagy can't stop wondering: "What if?"

He says he uncharacteristically walked to work that day and because of that he didn't end up dropping by the gas station to see Jimmy — and doesn't know what might have happened if he had.

"I think, the chances are, with a gun involved, I could have been —" he says, and then his voice trails off.

JESSICA SMITH/METRO

Jimmy Wiebe, in an image taken from Facebook. SCREEN GRAB

METRO CUSTOM PUBLISHING PRESENTED BY SCOTIABANK

SEE HOW CREDIT CARDS CAN ACTUALLY HELP GROW YOUR MONEY

MARRIED WITH KIDS

With two children in public school, a home in a suburb of Calgary, and an annual household income of $70,000, Peter and Kim have learned how to make the most of their money — and make it work for them.

Peter, 34, is an office manager at a downtown firm while Kim, 30, has just returned to the workforce and has a part-time job at a department store. They have a long-term financial goal to pay off their mortgage by the time Peter turns 60, and they have retirement and education savings plans in place too.

"We're especially good at stretching our budget on food," says Peter. "We plan meals ahead, shop the specials flyers and always pack lunches." The couple also manages with one car. "On the days I'm scheduled to work nights, I drop him off at the C Train — and he takes public transit," says Kim.

They've found other ways to save money too. For example, a few years ago they got a *Scotia Momentum*® VISA* card that they now use to pay for as many everyday purchases as they can.

The *Scotia Momentum*® VISA* card provides 2 per cent cash back on everyday spending such as gas, groceries, drugstore items, and recurring bill payments, and 1 per cent cash back on all other eligible purchases. While the annual fee for the card is $39, there's always a much higher return at the end of the year.

Every November (when the payout is made), the cash back lump sum is automatically deposited into their joint savings account.

"It's a no-brainer," says Kim. "And every purchase we make contributes to our annual cash back from the bank. It's become a great savings tool for us too," says Kim.

Scotia Momentum® Cash Back Calculator

Peter and Kim's profile:

Peter and Kim use their *Scotia Momentum*® VISA* card to pay for about $1,500 worth of purchases each month. Remember that some fixed costs, such as rent, are not payable by credit card and therefore not included in these calculations.

	$0 — 500 — 1,000	
Grocery Store		$ 225
Gas Station		$ 225
Drug Store		$ 150
Recurring Bills		$ 100
Other		$ 800
	Total Monthly	**$ 1,500**

Peter and Kim's Estimated Annual *Scotia Momentum*® Cash Back

Peter and Kim have a *Scotia Momentum*® VISA* card. Here's a look at the cash back their purchases add up to.

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2003

High school friends Currie and Gullen meet Corbett while attending the University of Saskatchewan and form the Breaks. Hanson joins and they change their name to the Sheepdogs.

2006

The band is still unknown

Debut album Trying to Grow is released. Few people take notice.

2010

The band's third album, Learn & Burn, is released independently. Although it charts on Canadian campus radio, it fails to garner much attention outside underground music circles.

December, 2010

The band learns that they have been chosen as one of 16 unsigned finalists in Rolling Stone's You Choose the Cover contest. They didn't even know they were entered in the competition.

June 15, 2011

TV spot

The group appear on Late Night with Jimmy Fallon as part of the Rolling Stone contest, writing and performing a brand new song in a single day.

Aug. 1, 2011

The band edge out L.A. pop singer Lelia Broussard to win Rolling Stone's You Choose the Cover contest, netting them a cover story with the magazine as well as a deal with Atlantic Records.

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Dave Starrett/For Metro

THE SHEEPDOGS

Metro sits down with Saskatchewan's favourite sons to talk about their rise to fame, Juno success and their secret fears — yes, it involves bees...

From appearing on the cover of Rolling Stone to touring with Kings of Leon, The Sheepdogs have come a long way from being an unknown prairie band.

Metro caught up with the Saskatchewan foursome for a feature chat.

What's your favourite bar?
Ewan Currie: It's the bar that I worked at: The Yard and Flagon in Saskatoon. Good people go there, good people work there, good people own it.
Ryan Gullen: It's a good place to go and just run into friends.

Favourite late-night diner?
Gullen: If I'm on Broadway I often go to Nino's for poutine and pizza. Me and my buddies call it P&P. We have this special thing where we touch our nose and they add feta to it. It's where a lot of people go after a night of drinking.
Currie: I'd be more at home cooking something on my BBQ.

Where would each of you spend a Sunday afternoon?
Sam Corbett: Either down in the park in downtown Saskatoon, or at the beach. There's a really nice beach about 20 minutes out of town. I call it Chief Whitecaps, but I've heard other names for it.
Gullen: You don't think beach when you think Saskatchewan but it's a really nice place to hang out. In the winter time there's not a lot of places you want to go because it's so cold outside.

What's a secret spot no one knows about?
Currie: There's this restaurant near where I live called The Wok. It's a little Vietnamese noodle bowl kind of place. It's where I go every week when I'm home. It's my little treasure when I'm there.
Corbett: Just over the last summer there's been this sandbar that's developed right underneath the Broadway Bridge, right downtown. I'm always shocked that there's no one there.
Gullen: There's not a whole lot of secrets. Word gets around.

Complete the sentence: "Saskatchewan is..."
Gullen: I always just associate it with being home. Saskatchewan is like peace of mind.

What do you miss most about home when you're on the road?
Currie: I miss the laid-back pace. It's a different kind of pace out here.
Gullen: Friends and family. You miss solace and being around familiar people.

The Music

What's the most memorable thing that has happened since the Rolling Stone cover?
Leot Hanson: Stepping onstage for that first arena tour with Kings of Leon.
Currie: Getting to make our new album down in Nashville and doing it with Pat Carney from the Black Keys.

Juno or Grammy — which do you covet most?
Currie: Neither. It's nice to get recognized, but music isn't a sport. It's for fun and for art.
Gullen: I also associate the Grammy's with pop music whereas the Junos diversify a bit.
And also friends of mine get nominated.

What Canadian artist/group do you think is underrated or underappreciated?
Currie: There's no finer performing act in Canada than The Sadies.
Hanson: Monster Truck. They're like Deep Purple on Steroids.

If you win a Juno what will it mean, relative to the past year of your life?
Hanson: So much has happened in the last year. It would be really cool, but I don't think it would affect our life.
Gullen: From an artistic standpoint, the recognition isn't really focused on the art, but on the work that you've done.
The last two years we've gone from being a band touring around, not making any money and trying to make a name for ourselves to people really recognizing our music and the things that we've done.

Describe your music in five words or less:
Gullen & Currie: Good time rock and roll
Corbett: Exciting original '70s throwback rock
Hanson: Whiskey brawling rock and roll twang

Aug. 3, 2011

Jimmy Fallon gets a crush on The Sheepdogs

The band appear on Jimmy Fallon for the second time.

Aug. 18, 2011

The band makes musical history

The Sheepdogs appear on the cover of Rolling Stone, becoming the first unsigned band to do so.

Sept. 22, 2011

The group appear on Project Runway, and the show's eight designers are asked to create designs that suit their '70s rock aesthetic and larger-than-your-average-runway model physiques.

Sept. 27, 2011

A deluxe edition of Learn & Burn with two bonus tracks is released on Atlantic Records. The album goes Gold (40,000 units sold) in Canada and lead single I Don't Know peaks at number 2 on Canadian rock charts.

October, 2011

The band tours with Kings of Leon

The band accompany Kings of Leon as opening act on their Canadian arena tour.

January, 2012

Fourth album in the works

It's announced that Black Keys drummer Patrick Carney is producing the band's highly anticipated fourth album. IAN GORMELY

The Rolling Stone Cover

Although the Saskatoon quartet have been grinding it out on the Canadian music scene for years, the band shot to fame both at home and down south after winning Rolling Stone's first ever You Choose the Cover contest.

- **Big break.** Wining the Rolling Stone competition landed them a coveted cover story with the venerable music mag as well as a record deal with Atlantic Records.
- **Surprise, surprise.** They were entered into the contest without their knowledge after a manager they'd met in Toronto submitted their demo.
- **The first cut.** They only found out about the contest after they were one of 16 bands handpicked as unsigned finalists.
- **People's choice.** The numbers were pared down over four rounds, as fans voted for their favourite artists online after the bands completed challenges that included performances at Tennessee music fest Bonnaroo and Late Night with Jimmy Fallon.

The magazine cover that changed everything for the band. HANDOUT/ROLLING STONE

The Sheepdogs, from left, Ewan Currie, Sam Corbett, Leot Hanson and Ryan Gullen pose in Times Square on Aug. 1, 2011 in New York City. GETTY IMAGES

Life

If you could have dinner with anyone dead or alive, who would it be?
Corbett: Stevie Wonder. He's a music genius, but just the stuff that he's had to deal with being blind. He seems to have a really positive outlook on life so he'd probably be a fun dinner companion.
Gullen: Paul McCartney. Going for dinner might be tricky, because he's vegan and I like to eat meat. It would be hard to pick a place to go that we could both be happy. I think he's one of the best songwriters, he's a bass player and he's had all these experiences. I would be interested in discussing how he was able to continue a music career over such a long period.
Currie: Joe Walsh. He was a bad-ass guitarist from James Gang and the Eagles later, but I don't really care about that. He gave Jimmy Page his iconic Les Paul. He hooked Pete Townsend up with his guitar and amp combo that he used on Who's Next. He saved David Crosby's life and Stevie Nicks said that he was the love of her life. So I have a feeling that he has a few stories to tell.
Hanson: Jimi Hendrix. I'd like to sit down and pick his brain a bit.

What characteristic do you admire most in yourself?
Corbett: I think something that applies to myself and to the rest of the band is our determination to make it happen. We were in the band for seven years before anything happened. We could have quit a long time ago.
Hanson: My drinkability. I can drink quite a bit.

In it to win it

"I think something that applies to myself and to the rest of the band is our determination to make it happen. We were in the band for seven years before anything happened. We could have quit a long time ago."

The Sheepdogs' drummer Sam Corbett

What characteristic do you most admire in others?
Corbett: I admire people who have a happy-go-lucky outlook towards life. Sometimes I feel I get too bogged down in the stresses of life.
Gullen: Passion is my biggest thing. I really admire people who have passion in their lives that helps them strive to do whatever. It doesn't necessarily have to be anything really big.

What frightens you?
Corbett: I guess I'd be scared that our band would be forced to change into something that it's not.
Gullen: I really don't like wasps or bees. I had a whole bunch of times where I got stung when I was a kid. It's embarrassing; I'm absolutely terrified of them. We play outside at a lot of festivals and wasps land on me while we're playing and its so hard for me to keep my composure.
Hanson: I don't like planes even though we fly all the time. When that turbulence starts, it just freaks me out.

What makes you laugh?
Currie: Nothing makes me laugh like the stupid inside jokes our band has. Similarly when you have your friends' inside jokes, when you're busting each other up, and ripping on each other, I laugh harder in those moments.
Hanson: Whether it be pulling the carpet out from someone's feet or hitting them with the freezer when they're not looking, a good prank always makes me snicker.
Corbett: I guess misfortune. Everything that's shitty that happens to us is also kind of funny.

TO READ ABOUT THE SHEEPDOGS' JUNO AWARDS, TURN TO PAGE 16

Who are these kids, anyway?

Some background on The Sheepdogs:

- **Who.** Ewan Currie, lead singer, guitar/Leot Hanson, guitar, vocals/Ryan Gullen, bass, vocals/Sam Corbett, drummer
- **What.** Shaggy four-piece rock band with a deep love of '70s rock and R&B
- **Where.** Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
- **When.** 2005 - Present
- **Why.** Winners of Rolling Stone's first ever Choose the Cover contest

Canadian Music Week

The prairies are breeding rock stars

MIKE BENHAIM
scene@metronews.ca

Last month, I missed Canadian Music Week (now known as Slacker CMW after their Internet radio sponsor) for the first time in years.

It was their 30th anniversary. The event is always rife with live performances from our nation's musical treasures, so following online was clearly not cutting it, but reading my screen presented a pattern I may not have otherwise observed.

To illustrate, I ask what this list calls to mind? The Sheepdogs, The Weakerthans, The Watchmen, Nickelback, Tegan & Sara, Chantal Kreviazuk and Feist.

To my mom, they're just names she's never heard, but if I add icons like Joni Mitchell, Neil Young, Burton Cummings, Tom Cochrane, BTO, Jann Arden and KD Lang, even she would say, "Canadian musicians for 500, Alex." (She never remembers my name.)

She would be right, but more specifically, they represent just a fragment of the world-class talent to emerge from... THE PRAIRIES!

Surprised?

Apparently, the time and energy one saves navigating hills can be redirected into some great art. Who knew?

Our Canadian cowboys, that's who.

This year's CMW presented two nights of Prairie Music with acts like Zoo Lion, Jordan Cook and Cowpuncher (who I'd check out even if they weren't a musical group), and many more.

Chantal Kreviazuk CONTRIBUTED

It prompted me to search and discover that "SaskAlberToba" has been breeding rock stars since before the Guess Who was even a question.

Many Canadians are of the misconception that our Western brethren are all about Country, but that's not all that's cookin' in Flin Flon. They are rocking in Red Deer and moving in Moosejaw. (Yeah, you get the point.)

So for your next long weekend, instead of Vegas or the Bahamas, might I recommend a "music-lover's getaway" where you can visit some of the most beautiful country our nation has to offer, and enjoy nights filled with some mighty fine home-grown harmony?

Delight in the unfamiliar landscape of your own backyard. The one with a smoking hot soundtrack, and where you can literally, to quote some non-Canadian rockers, "see for miles and miles and miles."

Tom Cochrane CONTRIBUTED

Burton Cummings CONTRIBUTED

Strathcona Avenue. Grass fire contained in Corman Park

Fire crews from Saskatoon responded to grass fire at approximately at 2:20 p.m. Saturday.

The fire was located south of Saskatoon in the area of Strathcona Avenue south of Grasswood Road in Corman Park.

A release from Saskatoon Fire and Protective Services said crews from Fire Halls 3 and 5 were dispatched to the scene. On arrival, crews found 10 to 20 acres of "pasture and grassland" involved in the fire and spreading quickly because of dry conditions.

Additional trucks were called in for assistance from Fire Halls 1 and 2. The release said the fire had spread across 200 acres before being brought under control at 7:40 p.m.

No one was injured in the fire. METRO

Duck Lake. Town gets second in Hockeyville vote

Duck Lake won $25,000 for the Beardy's Memorial Arena as a runner-up in the Kraft Hockeyville competition — but lost the grand prize to Ontario's Stirling-Rawdon.

Duck Lake, along with Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation, represented the west division of the competition, vying for the top prize of $100,000 in arena upgrades and the opportunity to host an NHL pre-season game.

The community's winning story was by Sheldon Couillonneur, who wrote about the rich hockey culture of Beardy's and Okemasis. "Families are brought together to encourage and promote hockey values of winning and losing with dignity, honour, and humility," he wrote.

More than 11 million votes were registered for the top five communities. METRO

Avenue X North

One injured when vehicle crashes into fence

Saskatoon Police Service (SPS) were called to a single-vehicle collision at 10:40 p.m. Saturday, in the 900 block of Avenue X North, where a vehicle crashed into a fence.

A press release from the SPS says air bags deployed on both the driver and passenger side of the vehicle. The driver, a 24-year-old man, was taken to hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. His passenger, 18, was not injured.

Police say alcohol is believed to be a factor and an investigation into possible impaired driving is underway. METRO

Lingerie football off to a late start

Ladies league. Cancelled flight delays tryouts by almost an entire month

MORGAN MODJESKI
saskatoon@metronews.ca

Women take part in tryouts for the Lingerie Football League in Regina on Saturday. LINELL GRUDNITZKY/CONTRIBUTED

Tryouts for one of the Lingerie Football League's (LFL) newest teams, the Saskatoon Sirens, were cancelled Sunday, after a delayed flight prevented LFL staff from reaching the city.

"Our staff's flight out of Las Vegas, a United Airway flight, was cancelled, and that set us back for Regina and caused us to miss Saskatoon altogether," said founder and chairman Mitchell Mortaza. "Unfortunately, we had to postpone Saskatoon because we don't have our coaching staff there yet."

The other team the LFL is bringing to Saskatchewan, the Regina Rage, held its tryouts Saturday. Mortaza said he was pleased with the turnout despite prior concerns.

"We were concerned about two things: one was that it's a very small market, so there's a limited pool of players we could pull from. But even worse was the incredibly slanted and targeted media coverage, which we were certain would chase away potential players," said Mortaza. "Despite all of that, there was an incredible turnout.

"It was a great start," he said.

However, Michelle Duchene, general manager of the Saskatoon Valkyries, Saskatoon's women's tackle-football team, says she feels the LFL will have a hard time in Saskatoon.

"We generally feel if women want to play football, there's lots of opportunities for them to play football, so there's no need to take their clothes off to play," said Duchene.

"Ultimately, it's not really about playing the sport. It's about sexism."

Duchene also said she expects the turnout for the tryouts to be quite low as she feels local media have been giving the LFL a lot of negative exposure.

"I don't think they're going to get a good turnout," said Duchene.

"It has a lot of exposure in Saskatoon over the last month or two and it hasn't been a lot of positive exposure."

Tryouts for the Sirens have been rescheduled for the weekend of April 27 and 28.

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Thrilla on the Hilla goes to Liberals in three rounds

Conservative Senator Patrick Brazeau and Liberal MP Justin Trudeau fight in a charity boxing match for cancer research Saturday in Ottawa. Trudeau stopped Brazeau in the third round. Former Liberal prime minister Pierre Trudeau, Justin's father, died of prostate cancer, while Brazeau's mother succumbed to lung cancer. FRED CHARTRAND/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Potato farmer home from Lebanese jail

Seeking extradition. N.B. man's lawyers, family expressed concerns about his deteriorating health

After more than a year in a Lebanese jail, Henk Tepper is finally home.

"I'm happy to be home," the New Brunswick potato farmer told a throng of reporters as he left the customs area at the Ottawa airport Saturday.

Tepper, who is in his mid-40s and from Drummond, N.B., has been in custody in Beirut since March 23 of last year.

He was picked up on an international arrest warrant on allegations he exported rotten potatoes to Algeria in 2007 and forged export documents.

A source close to Tepper says an Interpol red notice issued by Algeria remains in effect and the notice says he could face up to five years in prison if convicted of the allegations.

Tepper's lawyers have denied all of the allegations, saying the potatoes were inspected in Canada before shipment and met Algerian standards.

Algeria also alleges that Tepper forged documents related to the export of potatoes from Quebec and Prince Edward Island. Tepper was arrested in Lebanon while on an agricultural trade mission to promote seed potatoes from Atlantic Canada.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Political inaction?

A number of public appeals, meetings were held to push for Tepper's return home.

- **Legal limbo.** Diane Ablonczy, Canada's minister of state for foreign affairs, issued a statement saying the federal government has been working behind the scenes to get Tepper released.
- **Not enough.** Tepper's family and Liberal politicians have criticized Ottawa's efforts to have him returned to Canada, accusing the feds of not doing enough.

Health and safety

Feds looking to bury nuclear waste

The federal government is eyeing the site of the Chalk River nuclear reactor, 160 kilometres northwest of Ottawa, as a radioactive waste site.

Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. says 267,000 cubic metres of low- and medium-grade nuclear waste is now stored above-ground in steel containers at the Chalk River site.

The amount of radioactive material is expected to grow to 360,000 cubic metres by 2100.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Future funds

Ontarians urged to save for retirement

Middle-class families must save more for their retirement, or risk suffering a big shock in their golden years.

The Ontario government plans to repeat that warning during the coming months as Ottawa raises the eligible age for old age security to 67, postponing existing benefits for two years. Few Canadians are saving enough money for their retirement years, which will put more pressure on their families and provincial health and welfare budgets once they reach old age.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

70 countries pledge cash for Syrian rebels

A coalition of more than 70 partners, including the United States, pledged Sunday to send millions of dollars and communications equipment to Syria's opposition groups, signalling deeper involvement in the conflict amid a growing belief that diplomacy and sanctions alone cannot end the Damascus regime's repression.

The shift by the U.S. and its Western and Arab allies toward seeking to sway the military balance in Syria carries regional risks because the crisis there increasingly resembles a proxy conflict that could exacerbate sectarian tensions. The Syrian rebels are overmatched by heavily armed regime forces.

The summit meeting of the "Friends of the Syrian People" follows a year of failed diplomacy that seems close to running its course with a troubled peace plan led by UN-Arab League envoy Kofi Annan.

Indeed, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and other participants at the conference in Istanbul uniformly expressed concern that Annan's plan might backfire, speculating that Syrian President Bashar Assad would try to manipulate it to prolong his hold on power.

Clinton said she was waiting for Annan's report to the UN Security Council on Monday on the status of his peace plan.

"There cannot be process for the sake of process. There has to be a timeline. If Assad continues as he has, to fail to end the violence, to institute a ceasefire, to withdraw his troops from the areas he has been battering ... then it's unlikely he is going to ever agree," she said. "Because it is a clear signal that he wants to wait to see if he has totally suppressed the opposition. I think he would be mistaken to believe that. My reading is that the opposition is gaining in intensity, not losing."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pot of gold

Conference participants in Istanbul said Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries are creating a fund to pay members of the rebel Free Syrian Army and soldiers who defect from the regime and join opposition ranks. One delegate described the fund as a "pot of gold" to undermine Assad's army.

A Syrian boy flashes the victory sign during a demonstration in Idlib, Syria. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mali

Rebels seize Timbuktu

The junior officer who overthrew Mali's democratically-elected leader earlier this month and dissolved the nation's constitution made a U-turn Sunday, declaring amid enormous international pressure that he was reinstating the 1992 constitution and planning to hold elections. Capt. Amadou Haya Sanogo added that a national convention would be held to organize elections, but he failed to announce a timeline for the plans.

Sanogo's announcement came as rebels penetrated and seized control of the ancient northern city of Timbuktu, a move that deepens the crisis in the West African nation.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Capt. Amadou Haya Sanogo REBECCA BLACKWELL/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ice fishing

675 rescued from Russian ice floe

Russia's emergency services rescued 675 fishermen on Sunday from an ice floe that was drifting out to sea in the far east of the country.

None of the rescued ice fishermen required medical treatment, the emergency services on Sakhalin Island said. About half of the 675 fishermen were picked up by helicopters and the others by boat.

The emergency services said it received a report at midday Sunday that an ice floe was drifting into the Sea of Okhotsk with hundreds of fishermen on it. More than six hours later, all had been rescued.

Ice fishermen routinely get stranded on ice floes in Russia, especially in the spring as the temperatures rise. Sunday's operation was unusual only in the high number that had to be rescued.

One of the rescued fishermen, Vladimir Vasilenko, said they should have known better than to go out on such a day. "Of course the wind was blowing from the shore. We should have thought that something could happen, but people were going and we went as well."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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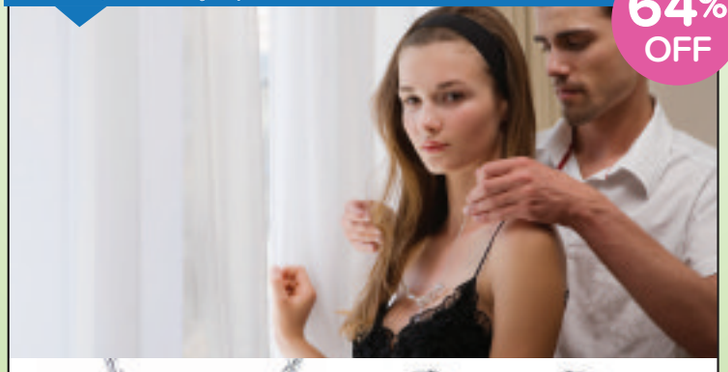

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Wisconsin primary.
Romney win would all but end the GOP race

A Mitt Romney victory in the Wisconsin Republican primary Tuesday could all but end the party battle to pick a challenger to U.S. President Barack Obama.

The former Massachusetts governor, who as CEO of a private equity firm amassed a fortune worth an estimated quarter of a billion dollars, is predicting success in the upper Midwestern state. He is now shifting his campaign attacks almost solely at Obama and away from fellow Republicans.

Obama was originally vulnerable in his bid for a second White House term because of the ravages left behind by the recession and the near national financial meltdown just before he took office. But the president has seen his prospects improve as a result of the Republican nomination fight and signs the economy is in a sustained recovery.

Even as Romney looks ever more likely to win the nomination, chief rival Rick Santorum said he would not give up.

Santorum said Romney is the wrong candidate to challenge Obama because of his support for a health-care plan in Massachusetts that was the basis for Obama's health-care overhaul that Republicans vow to overturn.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Scenario

Wisconsin Republican primary Tuesday:

- **A Romney win is likely** but chief rival Rick Santorum refuses to quit.
- **The Wisconsin vote will be Santorum's last chance** to prove his strength in the U.S. heartland, where he's said he can challenge Obama — but where Romney has beaten him consistently.
- **Santorum says he will drop out** should Romney accumulate the 1,144 delegates needed before the convention.

Historic Metro contest will send reader to space

The SXC Lynx spaceship carries two people — the pilot-astronaut and a passenger. ALEX STOKES/FOR METRO

World-beater. Global jury will pick winner of incredible flight

One of our readers will reach the highest of heights — Metro is the first newspaper to send a contest winner to space.

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At 60,000 metres, the curvature of the Earth can be seen, surrounded by the black void of outer space.

To prepare for the weightlessness, the contest winner will be required to undergo two to four days of training in the Netherlands.

The SXC Lynx takes off from Curaçao in the Caribbean for a one-hour flight.

Participants are required to complete a quiz and submit an inspiring proposal.

In addition to the global winner, a local winner will receive a secondary prize.

The local winner will be selected based on the highest number of Facebook "likes."

The global winner — the person who gets to go into space — will be selected by a global jury that includes Metro International members. They will conduct in-depth interviews.

The winner must be 18 years old by liftoff in 2014.

Your chance to soar

- **Enter the contest at metroinspace.com.**
- **Our groundbreaking contest closes on April 5.**
- **Information on the SXC Lynx spacecraft is at spacexc.com.**
- **The total prize value is $100,000.**

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Fuel-tanker strike? U.K. quells mad rush to pumps

Britain's government has moved to stop panic buying at gas pumps, telling motorists there is no need to fill up their tanks as previously stated. The new advice caps several days of confusion, which even supporters of the ruling Conservative Party say has dented its leadership credentials.

Things went wrong shortly after Britain's Unite union threatened to pull off a fuel-tanker strike that could still leave thousands of service stations drained of gasoline. Such strikes can have serious political consequences in Britain, where gasoline prices are already among the highest in Europe.

Fuel shortage warnings went as far as Cabinet Office minister Francis Maude suggesting that drivers fill their jerry cans — containers that can hold 20 litres of gasoline — as reserve. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Anti-tax protest

1M households in Ireland fail to pay property tax

Ireland is facing a revolt over its new property tax. The government says 1 million of the country's 1.6-million households have failed to pay the annual charge by Saturday's deadline. About 5,000 protesters marched through Dublin denouncing leaders as snakes and dictators. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Swiss investigation

German tax inspectors accused of 'espionage'

Swiss authorities have issued arrest warrants for three German tax inspectors over the purchase of a CD containing data on suspected tax cheats, according to the Bild am Sonntag newspaper. Reports say the Swiss accused the officials of "economic espionage." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

High time to tax the rich fairly: Obama

Buffet Rule. Push for new taxation comes as millions of Americans prepare taxes for April filing deadline

U.S. President Barack Obama is calling on Congress to increase taxes on millionaires, reviving a proposal he first pitched last September that aims to draw sharp election-year lines between the president and the Republican opposition.

The plan, scheduled for a vote in the Democratic-controlled Senate on April 16, stands little chance of passing in Congress. But it is a prominent symbol of the efforts the president and congressional Democrats are making to portray themselves as champions of economic fairness. Republicans dismiss the idea as a political stunt with little real effect on the budget.

"We don't envy success in this country. We aspire to it," Obama said in his Saturday radio and Internet address. "But we also believe that anyone who does well for themselves should do their fair share in return, so that more people have the opportunity to get ahead - not just a few."

Obama calls the plan the "Buffett Rule" for Warren Buffett, the billionaire investor who has complained that rich people like him pay a smaller share of their income in federal taxes than middle-class taxpayers. Many wealthy taxpayers earn investment income, which is taxed at 15 per cent. Obama has proposed that people earning at least $1 million annually — whether in salary or investments — should pay at least 30 per cent of their income in taxes. The push draws renewed attention to Republican presidential front-runner Mitt Romney, a millionaire who is paying 15.4 per cent in federal taxes for 2011 on income mostly derived from investments.

The president encouraged listeners to pressure their members of Congress "to stop giving tax breaks to people who don't need them." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tax rates

"Warren Buffett is paying a lower rate than his secretary. Meanwhile, over the last 30 years, the tax rates for middle-class families have barely budged."

U.S. President Barack Obama, on ending tax cuts for the wealthy

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Burger King courts the healthy

A diner orders food at a Burger King restaurant in Miami. Burger King launches 10 menu items including smoothies, frappes, specialty salads and snack wraps Monday — its biggest menu expansion since the chain opened its doors in 1954. LUIS M. ALVAREZ/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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URBAN COMPASS
Paul Sullivan
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Hey. It's springtime in Saskatchewan.

This is true in a literal sense, where a downright banana-ripening winter is giving way to an early crocus season.

And it's true in a figurative sense, where next year has finally arrived.

That was not a typo in this year's Best Places To Live in Canada, Moneysense magazine's annual list. That really was Regina at No. 5. And yes, that really was Vancouver at No. 56. So the next time your idiot brother-in-law from North Vancouver phones to discuss the cloud of daffodils blooming along the Stanley Park Causeway, read him the list.

Vengeance is sweet.

Including both of the province's major cities, there were four Saskatchewan cities in the top 35 this year, seven of them above Vancouver, and that includes Moose Jaw, baby.

The rest of the world is slowly catching on that this ain't your Grandad's Saskatchewan.

On second thought, it is your Grandad's Saskatchewan; it's just that the rest of the world is finally beginning to realize that Grandad was ahead of his time, at least before he retired to Victoria.

For the second year in a row, Saskatchewan has the strongest economy in the country.

At five per cent, the unemployment rate is the lowest in the country.

The province's retail sales in December were the highest ever, and 2011 posted the best year in the province's history.

At the same time, Regina and (to a lesser extent) Saskatoon boast some of the most affordable urban housing in the country. The average price of a detached bungalow in Saskatoon is projected at $388,000 in 2012. That may seem like a lot if you grew up in the City of Bridges, but the same house in Vancouver will cost you $1.1 million.

No place like home

People from Toronto who visit Saskatoon climb off the plane looking slightly dazed and bemused, as if they have a recent memory of visiting Shangri-la, but the boarding pass says they must be mistaken; that was called Saskatoon.

And that's not a typo either.

So it's a little chilly on the banks of the South Saskatchewan in January. At least it's sunny. Saskatoon has 320 sunny days a year, fourth in Canada.

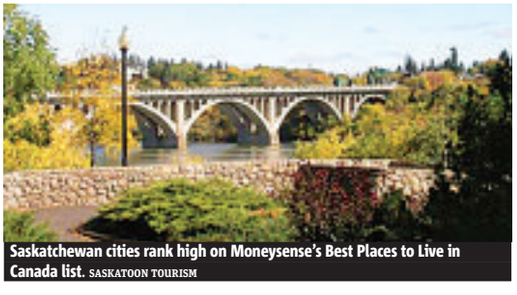
Regina is finally getting the recognition it deserves; Saskatoon remains Canada's best-kept secret. People from Toronto who visit Saskatoon climb off the plane looking slightly dazed and bemused, as if they have a recent memory of visiting Shangri-la, but the boarding pass says they must be mistaken; that was called Saskatoon.

Clever, eh?

The truth is that if you grew up in the Land of Living Skies (or whatever Tourism Saskatchewan calls it) you know you live in a great place. It's just kind of nice for the rest of the world to get it.

Abundant resources, lots of room, affordable, endless opportunity, not to mention knockout sunsets. And if all that wasn't enough, now you get Metro, free, five days a week.

Springtime. It's the best time of year.



Saskatchewan cities rank high on Moneysense's Best Places to Live in Canada list. SASKATOON TOURISM

Global awareness looks bright

MARKUS SCHREIBER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Earth Hour

150 countries dim the lights

Volunteers of the World Wide Fund for Nature set their own candles amongst about 5,000 others to picture the globe prior to Earth Hour in front of the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin on Saturday. Earth Hour takes place each year and is a global call to turn off lights for 60 minutes in a bid to highlight global climate change.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"We didn't really know how it would go when it first started, but each year we have more and more countries and cities and communities join on."

Zoe Caron, a spokeswoman for the World Wildlife Fund's Canadian operations

A song for action

- The new Earth Hour Anthem, When the Lights Go Down, was sung by crowds in Toronto to celebrate Earth Hour.
- The WWF calls it Canada's first ever crowd-sourced song. It was created from lyrics submitted and voted on by Canadians across the country.

National effort

511

The World Wildlife Fund Canada said 511 Canadian cities and towns participated in this year's event — the most ever.

Metropolitan Panel

Register at metropolitanpanel.ca and take the quick poll

Have you jumped on the Greek yoghurt bandwagon?

67% NO, IT'S STILL JUST YOGHURT

33% YES, IT'S TURNING ME INTO A GREEK GOD/GODDESS

Twitter

@LisaHeuchert: Grateful for the rain today! #aprilshowersmayflowers #yxe

@sethRock102: LFL tryouts in Saskatoon have been pushed back to the weekend of the 27th-28th. Thanks for the heads up @JGasson_21 @karinyeske

@MFGoblinTom: Very proud year for @TheSheepdogs. Congrats guys, you deserve everything and more! Thanks for representing #Saskatoon and #Canada as well!

@codieprevost: Congrats to #Saskatoon band @TheSheepdogs on winning @TheJUNOAwards for "New Group of the Year" & "Rock Album of the Year"

@Monstereditor: Do we need a double-wide drive-thru for a double-double? http://bit.ly/HcBzpZ Timmies causes traffic snarls across Canada - not just #bdnmb

metro

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2 SCENE

Sheepdogs take over Canada's capital with three Juno wins

Awards. The Sheepdogs and Feist have a winning weekend in Ottawa with three trophies each at the Junos

JOE LOFARO
Metro in Ottawa

Feist and Saskatchewan band The Sheepdogs came out on top at the 2012 Juno Awards by snatching three Junos each over the weekend. After winning two each at a gala and awards dinner Saturday, they both won their third at the televised show held at Scotiabank Place in Ottawa on Sunday.

On Sunday, The Sheepdogs won single of the year for their hit I Don't Know. The Nova Scotia-born singer-songwriter Feist won artist of the year, sweeping aside City and Colour, deadmau5, Drake and Michael Bublé. Before the show started, some of the nominees graced the red carpet outside the arena in chilly temperatures. Feist, Lights, MonkeyJunk, Dan Managan, Nickelback and Hedley greeted shrieking fans. Teen heartthrob Justin Bieber, who was a no-show, disappointed many of the fans who queued outside the arena hours before the broadcast started. Toronto rapper Drake also did not attend.

Host William Shatner opened up the show with a tongue-in-cheek monologue poking fun at artists' names. "It's good to be back in Ottawa the home of the Ottawa Senators and the home of the Stanley Cup contenders. Of course I'm from Montreal, so, I mean, who cares?" said Shatner.

The first award of the night went to Dallas Green for songwriter of the year. Nine performances kept thousands of screaming fans jumping out of their seats in the transformed arena. Nickelback was first to light up the stage with a hard, pyrotechnical performance. The band came in with three nominations but went home empty handed. Also up for a trio of awards was electronic music producer deadmau5. Like Nickelback, he left the weekend empty-handed.

Dallas Green accepts his award for songwriter of the year at the Junos Sunday. FRED CHARTRAND/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Winners

Here is a partial list of some of the best acts in Canada — the 2012 Juno Award winners.

- **Juno fan choice.** Justin Bieber
- **Single of the year.** I don't know — The Sheepdogs
- **Album of the year.** Christmas — Michael Bublé
- **Artist of the year.** Feist
- **New artist of the year.** Dan Mangan
- **Songwriter of the year.** Dallas Green
- **Dance recording of the year.** Hello — Martin Solveig & Dragonette
- **Group of the year.** Arkells
- **New group of the year.** The Sheepdogs
- **Country album of the year.** Roots and Wings — Terri Clark
- **Pop album of the year.** Storms — Hedley
- **Rock album of the year.** Learn & Burn — The Sheepdogs
- **Alternative album of the year.** Oh Fortune — Dan Mangan
- **Rap recording of the year.** Take Care — Drake
- **Adult alternative album of the year.** Metals — Feist
- **Blues album of the year.** To Behold — MonkeyJunk
- **International album of the year.** 21 — Adele

Canadian stars shine at gala dinner

Electronic musician Lights was the first artist to perform at Saturday's non-televised Juno gala and awards dinner. SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

JOE LOFARO
scene@metronews.ca

The Ottawa Convention Centre was transformed into a star-studded hub of Canada's greatest musical talent Saturday night as artists were handed the first batch of the 2012 Juno Awards.

The invite-only, non-televised Juno gala and awards dinner preceded Sunday's Juno Awards broadcast. Electronic musician LIGHTS was first to perform at the event, playing Where The Fence Is Low, from her new album Siberia.

Jian Ghomeshi, host of the Q on CBC, hosted the gala and slipped in a few jokes on stage. He didn't shy away from dropping the F-bomb twice, either.

Thirty-four awards were presented in rapid-fire succession with performances spread throughout the night by Oliver Jones, Lindi Ortega, Dan Mangan and MonkeyJunk.

Some winners from Saturday were: The Sheepdogs for new group of the year; Arkells for group of the year; Hedley's Storms for pop album of the year; and KENmode's Venerable for metal/hard music album of the year. Drake won rap recording of the year for Take Care.

Box office

Fans still eating up Hunger Games

The Hunger Games is still the first item on the menu for movie fans. The blockbuster took in $61.1 million to remain the No. 1 film in its second weekend. Studio estimates Sunday put The Hunger Games well ahead of Sam Worthington's action sequel Wrath of the Titans, which opened in second place with $34.2 million. That's far below the $61.2 million opening of its predecessor, Clash of the Titans, two years ago. Julia Roberts' comic Snow White reinvention Mirror Mirror debuted at No. 3 with $19 million. Roberts plays the wicked queen opposite Lily Collins as Snow White. Starring Jennifer Lawrence as a teen force to compete in a televised death match, The Hunger Games lifted its domestic total to $251 million after just 10 days.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

On the web

For more coverage of the Juno Awards and our exclusive interview with The Sheepdogs, visit metronews.ca/scene

Big winners

Sheepdogs rock the Junos with wins

Shaggy-haired Saskatoon southern-rock throwbacks The Sheepdogs were double winners at an upset-laden Juno Awards gala on Saturday where the bulk of the prizes were handed out. At a dinner ceremony in Ottawa where 34 of 41 trophies were distributed ahead of Sunday's TV broadcast, The Sheepdogs — whose sound took hold after they won a Rolling Stone magazine cover contest — claimed trophies for new group of the year and rock album of the year. The group was on tour in Australia with John Fogerty, but tweeted their delight about the pair of awards: "Very excited. Is 8 a.m. in Perth too early to start celebratory drinking?"
THE CANADIAN PRESS

Saskatoon's Sheepdogs took home new group of the year and rock album of the year at the Junos. HANDOUT

Quoted

"It's going to be a crazy night ... not Vancouver crazy. Let's keep the cars right-side up here."

Juno Awards host William Shatner, greeting the audience gathered at Scotiabank Place in Ottawa on Sunday for the show.

The Real Housewives of Vancouver cast: Ronnie Seterdahl Negus, left, Jody Claman, Christina Kiesel, Reiko MacKenzie and Mary Zilba. DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canuck Housewives: 'We're regular people'

Powerful women. The Real Housewives of Vancouver premieres Wednesday night on Slice

PHYLICIA TORREVILLAS
scene@metronews.ca

The Real Housewives of Vancouver promises a look into the charmed life of five Canuck ladies against the backdrop of mountain views. But the five stars from the hit reality franchise say it's not all about the glitz and the glamour; they're normal people too.

Ronnie Seterdahl Negus, a mother of five, says despite having a more privileged life than most people, she makes sure that her children work to get what they want.

"I didn't come from money and my husband and I worked hard to get where we are," said Negus, who owns four houses in West Vancouver, a private jet and a Napa Valley vineyard.

"It has made us successful and I try to breed success into my children. I don't think that's by handing them every little thing." She has a nine-year-old daughter who has special needs, and she's donating all of her earnings from the show to the B.C. Centre for Ability.

"We may have more glamourous styles, but deep down inside we're just normal people like everybody else," she says.

Jody Claman, a self-made businesswoman and clothing store owner, wants to show women that they can be who they want to be. "I am survivor and not a victim," Claman says. "I want women to say it's OK to get a divorce or be a single mom. You don't have to rely on anyone except for yourself."

Reiko MacKenzie, who calls herself the "ninja girl" of the group, says you're bound to get conflict when you put five women with strong personalities in one room. "It's entering a lion's den almost," she says.

Christina Kiesel, the twice-divorced travel addict, says the show's not scripted and what you see is what you get. "People that know me know that I embellish a lot or say a lot of things tongue-in-cheek," Kiesel says of the comment she made about her two divorces being her primary source of income. "I like to get people talking and I'm not hurting anyone."

At the end of the day, Kiesel says she hopes people will join them for a roller-coaster ride. "I've put myself out there doing this show, but I hope everyone is entertained," she says.

Moms with aspirations

Single mom and former beauty queen Mary Zilba, whose son has tuberous sclerosis, hopes to raise awareness and funds about the disorder through the show.

- **Working for a living.** "I just hope that people realize that I'm human with small and big problems like everybody else. I'm just working for a living," says Zilba, who's also looking to re-ignite her singing career.

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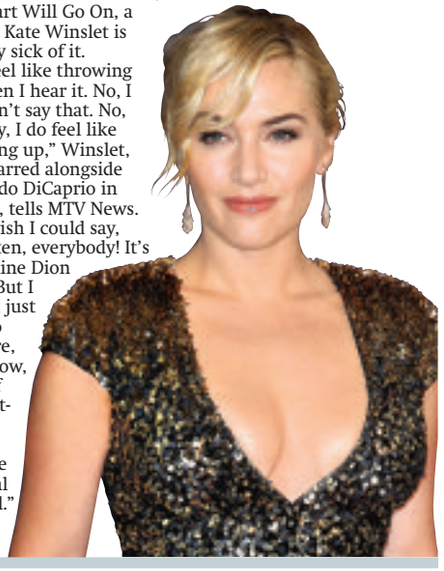
To register and for full contest details visit clubmetro.com

Winslet wants to barf

While many still consider Celine Dion's Titanic tune, My Heart Will Go On, a classic, Kate Winslet is literally sick of it.

"I feel like throwing up when I hear it. No, I shouldn't say that. No, actually, I do feel like throwing up," Winslet, who starred alongside Leonardo DiCaprio in Titanic, tells MTV News.

"I wish I could say, 'Oh listen, everybody! It's the Celine Dion song!' But I don't. I just have to sit there, you know, kind of straight-faced with a massive internal eye roll."



Lady Gaga

Gaga's tame birthday night

Lady Gaga had a not-so-wild celebration for her 26th birthday, treating her friends to some time at the gym before grabbing dinner with her parents, according to Us Weekly.

"Her friends filled the studio, and they had a blast," a source says of Gaga's visit to SoulCycle, an L.A. spin class studio.

"She requested (Bruce Springsteen's) Thunder Road because it's one of her favourite songs. And as for the location of the celebratory dinner: home.

"It was just a small thing with her family," says the source.

"Her mother cooked."

Brand stays philosophical

Don't worry about Russell Brand — he's doing just fine.

"I'm doing well," Brand, who filed for divorce from Katy Perry late last year, tells People magazine. And apparently "well" means he's in a philosophical mood.

"You don't need to brush it off if you don't get it on you in the first place," he says. "I don't have to let anything go. I don't hold on to anything negative. It's the same as zero-ness."

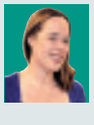
He's also not holding onto his recent arrest in New Orleans, which is "meaningless to me," he says. "It's like it never happened. It's meaningless."

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word

Morning shows heat up this week

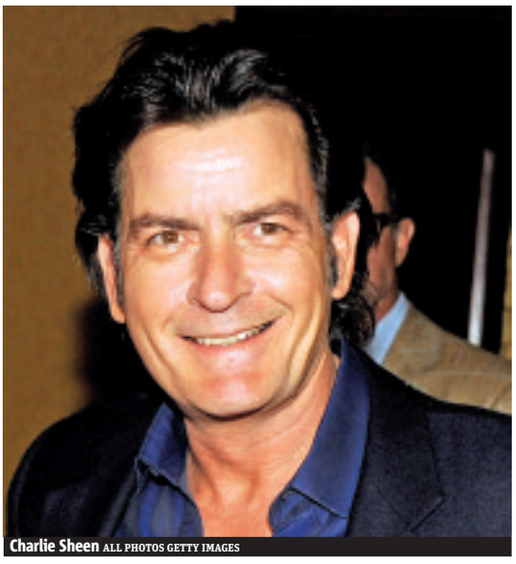


THE WORD
Dorothy Robinson
scene@metronews.ca

The Today Show is responding to the missile that ABC hurled last week — the announcement that anchorwoman Katie Couric is guest hosting Good Morning America — with a nuclear warhead of their own: The NBC morning show announced over the weekend that Tuesday's guest host will be none other than Sarah Palin (yes, that Sarah Palin. We thought it was an April Fools' joke, too).

To make things even more interesting, Oprah is stopping by CBS Morning News on Monday to see her BFF, host Gayle King. According to a CBS press release, Oprah's coming to "discuss everything from the latest developments at OWN, her Leadership Academy, and life after her daytime talk show."

Katie Couric, Sarah Palin, Oprah: It's as though this week's morning news ratings war was created just to give the rival networks' late-night talk show hosts something to joke about.



Charlie Sheen ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Charlie Sheen: Oh, what a year

It's hard to believe, but it's been a full year since Charlie Sheen's very public meltdown and the words "tiger blood" were launched into the public lexicon. Now Sheen is embarking on something of an apology tour.

"I didn't recognize parts of who that guy was. I just wish it was somebody else's body. You say it's been a year — it's either been a day, or a hundred years," Sheen told Matt Lauer during an interview on the Today show last week.

"I guess the plan was to reintroduce myself to America and to the media and say, 'Sorry about that, but here's what's happening now.'"

Clearly, that didn't go as planned. Now Sheen is busy promoting a new TV show, FX's Anger Management.

"I couldn't have the Two and a Half Men thing be my television legacy," Sheen says.

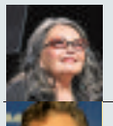
"I couldn't have that end on that note."

Lohan celebrates freedom via partying

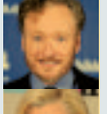
Despite advice from a judge that she should probably stop partying, Lindsay Lohan celebrated the end of her formal probation by throwing a little get-together at the Chateau Marmont, according to Radar Online.

"Lindsay's guests ate paella and watched Elizabeth Taylor's Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf? Lindsay was in an extremely good mood and grateful to be off of formal probation," a source says. "The party went until around 2 a.m. Alcohol was being served in moderation, but Lindsay wasn't seen drinking. It's just rather strange that Lindsay chose to have the party at the hotel, especially after what the judge said to her in court."

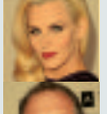
Twitter



@TheRealRosanne
how can I delete this twitter account-does anyone know? I dont understand twitter at all-I am 2 tech challenged for it-



@ConanOBrien
The Smithsonian has a video game exhibit. There's even a tour guide who yells at you for not being outside on such a nice day.



@JennyMcCarthy
feeling earthquake-y. just sayn.

@GarryShandling
I hate gossip. Ask anyone.

Chores

Women re-do husband's chores

Hands up if you reload the dishwasher after your husband has done it. Well, you're not alone.

According to the Telegraph, most women deem it necessary to "do over" the chores their domestically-challenged spouses proudly tackle around the house. Nearly half of the women polled say they re-wipe countertops and a third of them remake beds. If you ask us if women want equality, they shouldn't be re-doing tasks that have been assigned to their husbands in the name of domestic bliss, even if they can't figure out how to properly hang the hand towels.

JULIE GREEN (A.K.A. MUMMY BUZZ), YUMMYMUMMYCLUB.CA

Polls show that most women do over their husband's chores. ISTOCK

App

Housework is fun with this app

What if you could turn household chores into a game? The HighScore House app turns mundane into fun by assigning points to chores.

Parents simply enter their children's daily chores and assign point values to each one. Kids can mark off all of their completed tasks and count up their points.

Once kids have enough points, they can redeem them for rewards — picking what they want for dinner (10 points) or staying up an extra 15 minutes (20 points). The rewards are defined by you.

The interface is fresh and funky, and definitely has a fun factor to it.

KRISTA SWANSON, YUMMYMUMMYCLUB.CA

Got baby-name remorse? You're not the only one

Names. Here are some ways of dealing with people's reactions to your child's name

CANDACE ALPER
yummymummyclub.ca

When choosing the perfect name, the resources are endless. Baby-name books and online baby-naming tools are plentiful (a search for baby name books at indigo.com yielded 478 choices, and at 995 amazon.com).

Then there is the desire to be different. Babies are also being given names that might have come from browsing a dictionary or map.

With choice can also come challenges. Some things we hear parents say are:

"I love the name I chose and so did the parents of the five other Sophies or Sophias in my daughter's class."

"My son's name is always mispronounced. So frustrating. I like the way it sounds when we say it."

"In an effort to give our son a traditional name with a twist, we changed the spelling and added a (silent) H. I'm tired of spelling it for people and I think he will be too. This is the one time in my life that I'm wishing I had listened to my mother."

Got regret? Here are some things that you can do:

Use your child's middle name or initials.

Choose a nickname that fits. Miley Cyrus was born "Destiny Hope" and was always called "Smiley" because she smiled so much. She shortened it to Miley. Voila.

How about a variation on the name? Alexandra could be Allie or Lexie; Jacob could be Coby or Jay.

Go with it! Remember why you chose it in the first place. YUMMYMUMMYCLUB.CA IS AN ONLINE RESOURCE TO HELP BUSY WOMEN SURVIVE MOTHERHOOD

Pronunciation

It makes you cringe and scream inside when that lovely name is mispronounced. Learn how you and your child can deal with it.

- **Repeat it.** Use your child's name often so that the people around you hear it and catch on. "Maygan was up all night again," "Maygan will need a good nap today," etc.
- **Shorten it.** Be OK with a short form of the name that you know won't be mispronounced. For example, Alex can be a nickname for Alexandria or Alexandra.
- **Ignore it.** You saw it coming. You're ready for it. Help your child learn that his or her name might be said in different ways.

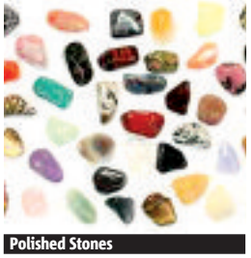
Giving your child a unique name can pose problems. ISTOCK

Easter alternatives to those chocolate eggs

Looking for a great alternative to candy and sweets for your children's Easter baskets? As a mom and member of Neighbourhood Toy Stores of Canada, I have some great ideas for kids of all ages.

Polished Semi Precious Stones ($2 each)

Instead of chocolate eggs, how about some polished stones? They are lovely to look at and would fit nicely into an egg for a hunt. Bonus: There are no messy foil wrappers left all over the house.



Polished Stones

Worry People ($2)

Worry People are six little hand-made dolls from Guatemala who, according to legend, will take your children's worries away while they sleep. At bedtime, you tell one secret worry to each doll and then put them under your pillow.

Worry People

O Balls ($9)

O Balls are perfect for babies, toddlers and those of us who have a hard time catching a ball. The unique design allows infants to hold onto them and toddlers to practice catching. Warning: It's highly addictive!

O Balls

PlasmaCar ($70)

These self-propelled cars are great fun for kids (and adults too!) Bonus: They are a great way to work off those Easter chocolate calories. ANGELA FIELD, YUMMYMUMMYCLUB.CA

PlasmaCar

3 LIFE

Tax Breaks

Fitness and Art

Gymnastics, art, music, hockey, ballet. Did you know that some of your children's extracurricular activities can actually result in tax breaks for you?

With the Children's Arts Tax Credit or the Children's Fitness Tax Credit, parents can claim up to $150 per child per year for eligible art and fitness expenses paid for children under 16.

The organizations you're handing your kids off to will be able to tell you if they are eligible for the credit, and they'll determine the part of the fee that qualifies for the tax credit.

Don't forget to request a receipt for tax purposes.

SARAH DEVEAU, YUMMYMUMMYCLUB.CA

Support

Autism Awareness

Today is the fifth annual World Autism Awareness Day. People and organizations worldwide are raising awareness about autism by participating in 'light it up blue.' Show your support and put on something blue.

For more, visit autismspeaks.org.

DELIA MACPHERSON, METRO

On the Web

P.E.I. school kids play Fathers of Confederation, win national contest.

Let the greens season begin with a tangy Greek Salad

This recipe serves four to six. THE CANADIAN PRESS

There is no doubt that the best Greek Salad is made with seasonal, local vegetables, but this classic Mediterranean starter also brightens up appetites ready for spring weather.

It's best, of course, teamed with a fine Greek extra virgin olive oil, good firm kalamata olives and tangy imported Greek feta.

1. Slice cucumber in half lengthwise and scoop out seeds. Cut cucumber into bite-size pieces.

2. In a large bowl, combine cucumber, green pepper, tomatoes, red onion and olives. Sprinkle with olive oil, oregano and salt and pepper to taste.

3. Add a splash of vinegar if salad needs a touch of acidity; it all depends on the flavour of the tomatoes.

4. Fold in chunks of feta. Serve on a bed of fresh crisp greens, if desired.

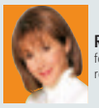
ALL THE BEST RECIPES BY JANE RODMELL (ROBERT ROSE INC.)/THE CANADIAN PRESS/ADAPTED BY EMILY RICHARDS, PROFESSIONAL HOME ECONOMIST, COOKBOOK AUTHOR AND TV CELEBRITY CHEF. FOR MORE, PLEASE VISIT EMILYRICHARD-

Ingredients

- Half an English cucumber
- 1 green bell pepper, cut into chunky bite-sized pieces
- 2 ripe tomatoes, cut into chunky bite-sized pieces
- Half a small red onion, thinly sliced and separated into rings
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) pitted and sliced kalamata olives
- 45 ml (3 tbsp) extra virgin Greek olive oil
- 10 ml (2 tsp) dried oregano leaves, crumbled
- Kosher or sea salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) red wine vinegar (approx)
- 125 g (4 oz) feta cheese, broken into small chunks
- Fresh crisp greens (optional)

Healthy eating

Choose it and lose it



ROSE REISMAN
for more, visit rosereisman.com

Many Chinese restaurants are known for their plentiful dishes that won't break the bank. But be careful what you reach for.

Pork Chop Suey with Noodles

1,341 calories, 81 g fat
In many Chinese restaurants, the quality of pork used in this dish is of a lesser quality, usually with excess fat.

Equivalent

One serving of Pork Chop Suey with Noodles is your total daily calories and fat. It is equal in calories to 10 loaded chicken wraps from Popeyes.

Chicken Chop Suey with Noodles

819 calories, 40 gm fat
Chances are boneless, skinless chicken breast is used in this dish, resulting in close to half the calories and fat.

Colombian La Vereda
is this month's World Coffee feature
Explore the world through your mug
FREE coffee
Get a cup of the world's finest coffee on us when you sign up for Timothy's World Coffee Club.
Join the club at www.timothyscafes.com
At participating cafes only. While quantities last.
Timothy's World Coffee
www.timothyscafes.com

Use mint for more than just your breath

In North America, mint has struggled to land on the dinner table. We tend to associate it with sweets and breath mints.

But elsewhere in the world, especially North Africa, the Middle East and Asia, mint is used to lend a crisp, almost peppery contrast to savoury dishes, especially fatty ones (think lamb with mint sauce).

When you get the mint home, give it a good wash in cold water, then snip off the bottoms of the stems. You can prolong its life — sometimes by weeks — if you stand the stems upright in a glass of water and refrigerate.

Mint is as aromatic as it is flavourful.But that also means you'll want to go easy with it to avoid overpowering other flavours in your dish.

Mint loves vegetables, cooked and raw (it's key to the flavour of fresh Vietnamese spring rolls, for example).

It also goes well with roasted poultry and pork, and helps cut through assertive cheeses such as feta.

1. In large pot of boiling salted water; cook pasta 8 minutes or until tender but firm. Drain and return to the pot; set aside.

2. In skillet over medium-high, heat olive oil and cook onion and garlic for 4 minutes.

3. Add tomatoes and cook for 2 minutes or until just softened. Add capers and cook everything for 1 minute. Remove skillet from heat and stir in the feta, mint, salt and pepper.

4. To serve, spoon sauce over pasta and toss gently to coat.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/ ADAPTED BY EMILY RICHARDS, FOR MORE, VISIT EMILYRICHARDSCOOKS.CA.

Ingredients

- 500 g (1 lb) penne pasta
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) olive oil
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 500 ml (2 cups) cherry or grape tomatoes, halved
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) capers, drained
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) crumbled feta
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) finely chopped fresh mint
- Pinch each salt and ground black pepper

Green way to run

A simple change can speaks volumes. More and more companies creating eco-friendly running shoes

BEN KNIGHT
life@metronews.ca

If you burn through shoes like you're burning rubber, you might consider getting an eco-friendly pair. HANDOUT

Athletic shoes take a terrible pounding, from heat, cold, rain, snow — millions of hard, sharp impacts from the simple human acts of walking and running.

They need to be light, strong and incredibly durable. Is there any room for them to be eco-friendly, as well? Yes, says Jenine LaFayette, marketing manager for Brooks Canada. She's talking about a cutting-edge sneaker called Green Silence, which the company introduced in 2009.

"This shoe has a lot fewer parts. There's less material, so it can biodegrade faster," she explains. "The rubbers that are used are recycled. We also use bio-green adhesives and dyes. Our laces and reinforced webbing are all post-consumer recycled. We've looked at all the pieces of the shoe puzzle, and how we can make a difference in pulling the construction together."

The key breakthrough is a material called BioMoGo. It's a funny name, but there's a serious purpose.

"BioMoGo midsoles biodegrade 50 times faster than the traditional midsole," LaFayette says.

"It's a shoe that's built to last. It has to be exposed to the right materials and conditions for it to biodegrade."

LaFayette laughs at the suggestion that some runners' lockers might actually simulate conditions within a landfill. "BioMoGo material has got a compound that makes it delicious to the bugs within the landfill environment. So unless you've got those types of enzymes at the bottom of your locker — which hopefully you don't — it won't react the same way."

Brooks is far from being the only major shoe manufacturer doing this. The Adidas line of Samba shoes features significant green components. Nike has even rebuilt and repositioned its popular Air Jordans to be environmentally friendly.

And the stakes are huge. Statistics Canada reports Canadians spent a staggering $1.6 billion on athletic footwear in 2010.

"Consumer response has been great," she notes. "A lot of consumers are really looking for that green solution when it comes to footwear. As far as consumer performance, we just had someone win the 5K Around the Bay race in Hamilton, Ont., wearing Green Silence."

By the numbers

$1.6B

Total sales of athletic shoes in Canada in 2010, according to Statistics Canada – up from $1.1 billion in 2004.

Queen of Green

Avoid these home hazards

QUEEN OF GREEN
Lindsay Coulter
green@metronews.ca

What qualifies as household hazardous waste? I have old Comet and Pledge bottles collecting dust.
Kylie of Halifax

Many common household cleaners sold in Canada contain hazardous chemicals.

Examples of household cleaners considered to be household hazardous waste (HHW) are abrasive cleaners, aerosol air fresheners, all-purpose cleaners, ammonia, bleach, disinfectants, drain cleaners, fabric softeners, glass cleaners, laundry stain removers, mildew removers, oven cleaners, toilet cleaners, and tub and tile cleaners.

These materials or products can cause illness or death to people, plants and animals.

Correct disposal is important to prevent the spread of chemicals in our soil, air and water.

Never pour or flush HHW substances down the drain where they will enter the sewage system.

Chemicals can corrode plumbing and cause failure in septic systems before they make their way to our waterways and oceans. I realize that's ironic, because most of them are used to clean the toilet and end up down the drain!

Each Canadian province has instituted a household hazardous waste collection program to make it easy for Canadians to dispose of these toxic items with minimal environmental impact.

In Nova Scotia, HHW disposal options by are divided by seven different solid waste-resource management regions.

Check out ReduceYourWaste.ca or the government website gov.ns.ca/nse/waste.

Next shopping trip down the cleaning products aisle, avoid cleaners with hazard symbols.

Opt instead for products from companies that voluntarily disclose ingredients on the label.

In fact, we're asking Canadians to open up their cleaning cupboard to investigate whether their home cleaning products contain toxic ingredients.

Please take 10 minutes to fill out our survey this spring at davidsuzuki.org/whatsinside (and enter for a chance to win fabulous prizes).

FOR MORE QUEEN OF GREEN VISIT DAVIDSUZUKI.ORG/GREENLIVING

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Ain't no mountain high enough to keep them from gliding toward glory

World Cup ski champion Thomas Grandi and Olympic silver medal winning cross country skier Sara Renner are raising their young family in Canmore, Alta. PROVIDED

Passion at its peak.
Two high-performance athletes provide hospitality in the hills

THE IN-CREDIBILITY FACTOR
Teresa Kruze
life@metronews.ca

Olympic medalist Sara Renner and World Cup champion Thomas Grandi may have retired from competitive skiing, but they didn't park their skis too far from the front door.

Sliding into the business world, they bought Paintbox Lodge in Canmore, Alta., and are now raising their young family amidst the glorious Rocky Mountains.

Moving from high performance athletics to business isn't that much of a stretch. Most athletes do four-year business plans when getting ready for an Olympics and run their careers like a business. But Grandi admits there was one thing he had to learn.

"Patience. When you go out of the start gate any thing is possible and you could go from last to first. In business even though you have a happy customer they may not come back until next year."

But Grandi and Renner are still winning and business has doubled since last year.

"I'm hoping people will stay with us and take a walk along the river path." Sara says. "They will find their soul is quieted and they can be rejuvenated before going back to their busy lives."

That's top-of-the-podium advice from two high performance athletes turned business people.

Lesson learned

"Patience. When you go out of the start gate any thing is possible and you could go from last to first."

Thomas Grandi on what he has learned as a business owner.

Success

How to move mountains

- Setbacks are your best opportunity for future improvement.
- Get the most from your team and offer incentives that benefit everyone — like profit sharing.
- Have perspective in your working life and prioritize the things that mean a lot to you.
- Your business will have more chance of success if you are happy.
- If you are stumped, go for a run, walk, ski or do some yoga. Get the blood circulating to your brain and great thoughts will follow.
- The first person you have to convince that you can be a champion is yourself.

Study finds that heaps of homework far from helpful for younger students

Learning lethargy.
Research finds being bogged down by the books not beneficial

CASSANDRA GARRISON
Metro World News in New York

All that time you spent doing tedious homework assignments back in your school days was all for naught.

Turns out, if a recent study is to be believed, it probably didn't help you get any smarter.

It might have even set you back.

Researchers at Sydney University in Australia found that too much homework can often have the opposite effect on students than intended.

Instead of enhancing their intellect, they become bored and unhappy, leading to little academic advancement.

"What the research shows is that, in countries where they spend more time on homework, the achievement results are lower," Dr. Richard Walker, from Sydney University's Education Faculty, told The Telegraph.

The study found that 59 per cent of 10- and 11-year-olds do less than two hours of homework per week. About 22 per cent do three or four hours a week, and five per cent complete seven or more hours of homework per week.

"At the moment homework (is often) an add-on because parents want it," Walker added.

High school switch

Get back to work

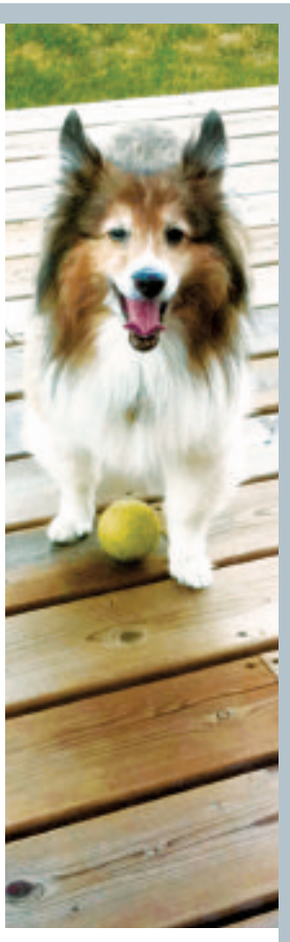
- An exception to the study was high school students in grades 11 or 12, who proved to benefit from more than a few hours of homework each week.

Kids may now have a reason to contest after-school study time. ISTOCK

More work, more problems?

"What the research shows is that, in countries where they spend more time on homework, the achievement results are lower."

Dr. Richard Walker
Sydney University Education Faculty member



ANIMAL KINGDOM

DOGS AND CATS CAN BRING MORE TO YOUR LIFE THAN YOU MAY THINK

Can having a pet improve your health? Absolutely, says Dr. Jim Berry, Vice-President, Canadian Veterinary Medical Association and a veterinarian at Douglas Animal Hospital, Fredericton.

MORE EXERCISE

If you have a dog, you pretty much have to get them out there and walk. "Of course, that gets people moving themselves," says Berry. That's good for everyone, and for seniors particularly, it supports continued mobility.

A RICH SOCIAL LIFE

Having a dog is a great way of getting out into the community and making friends... because when you have a dog, people stop to chat. "Having a dog creates an instant social atmosphere."

FEEL GOOD

"Numerous studies have associated pets with stress reduction and even remission of psychiatric illnesses, particularly depression and anxiety disorders," says Dr. Irvin Wolkoff, a Toronto psychiatrist. "The key factor is the kind of uncritical affectionate closeness of pets towards their owners." Unlike relations with people, interactions with pets are uncomplicated, reliable and pleasing, says Wolkoff. "We respond with a reduction in stress. That helps us feel better, and it reduces our circulating levels of adrenalin and cortisol, the classic stress hormones." He says this change is associated with a reduced risk of coronary disease as well as a number of other conditions.

COMPANIONSHIP

A pet provides something to communicate with, and in this way, can stave off loneliness, says Wolkoff. "Plus, animals aren't needy and they don't care if you've had a bad day — they still respond to you."

FAMILY TIES

More than 50 per cent of pet owners consider their pets their kids... and it's not just what they call them but what they consider them, says Berry. "They really are part of the family and the expectation goes that they'll be treated as a family member. I think this attitude has elevated the humane treatment of animals in society." At the end of the day, "all this only works if you like animals," says Wolkoff. "If you don't, pets will increase your stress."

–By Ylva Van Buuren

WANT TO GET A PET?

The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association reminds everyone that it's important to choose a pet that is appropriate for your lifestyle, life situation and pocketbook (all pets are an ongoing expense). Here's a quick guide.

PUPPY OR KITTEN Requires training and constant attention.

DOG Most need a walk twice a day.

CAT More independent and much less demanding than a dog.

BIRD Requires daily commitment.

FISH Easy care,but needs regular cleaning and specific care.

EXOTIC (rabbit, guinea pig, snake): Specific care requirements are important.

MOST POPULAR DOG BREEDS
Labs, Golden Retrievers, Yorkies and German Shepherds.

MOST POPULAR CAT BREEDS
Persian and Siamese.

HEALTHY CAT

SHARING YOUR HOME WITH A CAT MAKES LIFE PURR-FECT!

And, of course, you want to help your feline friend stay healthy and happy. Here's how.

VISIT THE VET

Regular visits to the vet are a must for checkups and cat care. Discuss annual shots and protection from fleas and other parasites as well as dental health. Your vet can make dietary recommendations too.

FEED HER PREMIUM CAT FOOD

Cats need a healthy diet, and it's important that their nutritional needs are met with food that is especially designed for cats. At the same time, kittens and cats have different requirements depending on their age and health status. Be sure fresh water is always available.

PROTECT YOUR CAT

Many owners make the decision to keep their cats indoors, and they provide an enclosed area outside where their cat can roam safely, enjoy the sun, and watch the birds. It's also important to cat-proof your home and to make the cat litter box easily accessible.

KEEP HER BUSY

Your cat needs to be active some of the time. Remember, cats can sleep for 18 hours out of 24 – and that makes them susceptible to weight gain as time goes by. Keep your cat entertained with toys that bring out his hunting and stalking instincts. Playtime with you is good bonding time too.

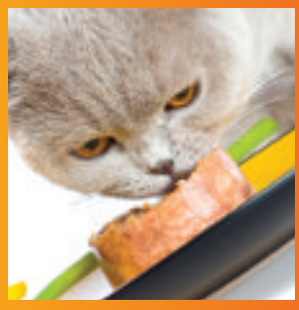
BE OBSERVANT

As all cat owners know, these feline creatures can be pretty independent. So it's important to be aware of any changes in appearance, eating habits, personal care habits and disposition. This is especially important as your cat gets older (about eight) when age-related illnesses often develop.

LOVE YOUR CAT

There's nothing like a little R&R with your cat purring in your lap!

SERVING UP A HEALTHY & DELICIOUS DIET



Ask your veterinarian about the IAMS range of premium canned and dry food for all the different stages of a cat's life – from the time they are kittens, through their adult and senior years, and for special dietary needs too. IAMS foods provide natural ingredients:

- Chicken, lamb and fish protein to promote healthy muscles.
- Vitamins, minerals and other nutrients for healthy heart and eyes.
- Natural source of fibre from beet pulp for healthy digestion.

Keep cats playing strong with new Iams® Senior Plus.
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Iams Senior Plus for cats 11 and older. With 2x the antioxidants,* it helps restore the immune response to that of an adult cat. And it helps fight signs of aging.
*vs Iams Original or Iams Adult.

TIPS TO PREVENT YOUR PET'S MESS

DO YOU LOVE YOUR PET, BUT HATE THE MESS?

For dog owners especially, cleaning up after their furry friends is a daily battle.

Dogs are more than happy to track mud and grass from the backyard to your floor or leave fur and dander to collect on your carpet and furniture. What's a loving pet owner to do? Dogs will be dogs, but there are ways to prevent some messes and clean up others more easily. Take a look at a few helpful tips for you and your pet:

• Place rubber or plastic mats in areas that messes are likely to occur, such as under food and water dishes.

• Keep a "pet cleaning kit" with paper towels, hand-held vacuum, old bath towels and cleaning solutions in a bucket where you can get to them quickly. The faster you get on a pet mess, the easier it is to clean, and the less likely it will be to leave a permanent stain.

• Pet hair and dander can trigger allergies for some people and are difficult to remove from carpet. A regular grooming schedule can help eliminate shedding hairs before they end up in the home. It also keeps pets clean, happy and comfortable.

• Installing a faucet in a mudroom or garage allows homeowners to clean off their pets before bringing them into the house. Take a look at a few ideas at deltafaucet.ca. Try using a pull-down kitchen faucet with a laundry tub to make bathing smaller pets — as well as the clean-up afterwards — a breeze.

• While training pets to keep off of furniture may be difficult, consistency is key. If pets are part of the family, they also have to learn to live comfortably with everyone else.

– News Canada

FIVE TIPS FOR A TRULY PET-FRIENDLY HOTEL STAY

Let's face it, the last thing you want to do when heading out on the road is leave the furry family members behind. With 150 locations in Canada, Comfort Inn hotels say they are no strangers to guests travelling with pets and offer the following tips to make your next stay at a pet-friendly hotel, truly pet-friendly:

1. CALL AHEAD to double check pet-policies and ask if a kennel is required to avoid any unpleasant surprises upon arrival.

2. PACK YOUR PET'S BED along with their favourite blanket or toy to help them feel at home in the unfamiliar space.

3. ASK ABOUT A PET NOTIFICATION DOOR HANGER at the front desk, or bring your own to be sure hotel staff and other guests are aware a four-legged guest is staying in your room.

4. KNOW YOUR PET'S WEIGHT
Some hotels have weight restrictions and you may be asked to provide this information at check-in.

5. IF YOU HAVE TO LEAVE YOUR PET ALONE in your room, turn on the radio or TV before leaving; the background noise and voices will be soothing.

If your pet suffers from separation anxiety, don't leave them alone. Noise complaints and damage fees could ruin an otherwise perfect vacation.

– News Canada

GIVE ME SHELTER

ADOPTING A RESCUE ANIMAL IS A WONDERFUL THING TO DO, BUT BEFORE YOU START LOOKING, IT'S IMPORTANT TO DO YOUR HOMEWORK

And that includes finding a reputable shelter to work with.

A good shelter wants to find "forever" homes for its animals and will work hard to match you with the right animal whether you're looking for a dog, cat or smaller animal.

The last thing a shelter wants to do is see an animal that has been adopted out, returned, says Shelley Hawley-Yan, director of Project Jessie, which is the animal rescue arm of the Animal Alliance of Canada.

Unfortunately there is no national legislation that regulates rescue organizations. In general, you'll find dogs and cats in most shelters and rescue organizations. But some specialize in certain dog breeds while others specialize in more unusual pets, such as rabbits, birds and even turtles.

HERE ARE SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF A REPUTABLE SHELTER

- It has an adoption process that helps match you and the animal based on the pet's needs and personality. There's probably a written application, a phone or in-person interview, and possibly a home visit.
- You'll have to sign a contract, which will stipulate your ownership responsibilities; also if the adoption doesn't work out, the animal will be returned to the shelter, says Hawley-Yan.
- The animals up for adoption may be placed in foster homes. While not all shelters do this, when foster homes are involved there may be a better understanding of the animal's personality (compared to animals that are caged).
- The shelter charges a reasonable adoption fee of between $100 and $300 average, says Hawley-Yan.
- Vet assessment and care is provided until the adoption; spaying/neutering is a requirement of the contract.

–By Ylva Van Buuren

WHEN YOU ADOPT A PET...

1. IT'S A HUGE COMMITMENT of up to 20 years (smaller animals like gerbils have a much shorter lifespan).

2. RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP INCLUDES TRAINING AND EXERCISING your pet, licenses, health care — and always picking up after your dog.

3. SPAYING AND NEUTERING is part of the deal.

4. THERE ARE ON-GOING COSTS — and you're OK with that.

5. THE BEST PART — having a pet is unconditional love at its finest!

HAVE PET, WILL TRAVEL

"Lost dogs" — that's the number one problem we see when pets travel with their families, says Dr. Lloyd Keddie, president of the Canadian Veterinarian Medical Association and a vet at the North Peace Animal Hospital in Fairview, Alta.

They're let out for exercise in a strange area such as a campground, motel or airport ... and they get confused and disappear."

Proper identification is at the top of the must-do list when you travel with pets and Keddie recommends micro-chipping your dog or cat (a common procedure, the vet uses a needle to place a little chip under the animal's skin). "If ID is on the collar only, it may be left behind if the collar comes off. With a microchip, all a vet has to do is scan the lost animal to find out who the owner is."

He recommends checking in with your vet before your trip. "Tell us where you're going ... and we'll look into whether there are any health concerns you should know about such as Lyme disease or heartworm." There is medication and care instructions for example, if you are going to areas populated by ticks that carry Lyme disease.

Does your pet even want to travel? While cats generally do not like riding in cars, sometimes a dog will be happier staying home too, says Keddie.

Angela Wu at Pet Friendly Canada (petfriendly.ca), Calgary, says another one of the biggest mistakes pet owners make is not calling ahead to make sure pets are welcome at lodgings. "You should reserve pet-friendly rooms ahead because there may only be a few available."

Be sure to read the pet policies, says Wu. Typically, accommodations charge $10 to $25 per night but price varies.

Some cities in Canada ban certain breeds — be sure to research this too.

Once you are there, Wu says you should never leave pets unattended in the room because some dogs get stressed in unfamiliar places and start barking.

"And don't sneak in your pets — that's a bad idea," says Wu.

TIME TO BRUSH FIDO AND MISS KITTY'S TEETH

"IF YOU WANT YOUR PET TO LIVE LONGER, YOU HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF ITS TEETH,"

says Dr. Loic Lengendre, West Coast Veterinary Dental Services, Vancouver. Their breath will smell sweeter too!

Healthy teeth and gums are part of an animal's well-being , says Dr. Troye McPherson, a spokesperson for Canadian Veterinary Medical Association and a veterinarian at the Full Circle Veterinary Alternatives clinic in Dartmouth, N.S. "It's important for them to have a comfortable-feeling mouth and to be able to chew food properly and swallow it. Also, dental disease can impact the heart, kidney, liver, lungs and bladder."

Just like in people, plaque can form under the gums, calcify to form tartar and cause inflamed gums (gingivitis). When periodontal disease develops, bacteria can easily enter the bloodstream and cause infection in the major organs in the body.

"If we see mild plaque during an examination, we recommend home care," says McPherson. If there are more serious problems, a professional dental cleaning will be recommended.

But regular home care is something that cat and dog owners should do from the time their pets first come home. "Use your finger and let the puppy or kitten get used to having it in its mouth," says McPherson. Then, progress to a cloth and a toothbrush.

"Daily brushing helps remove 60 to 65 percent plaque, and that's what we want to make a difference on periodontal disease," says Lengendre.

Certain chew toys as well as dental diet kibble can help too. The food is structured so it cleans the surface of the tooth. "There's usually an enzyme in the kibble that inhibits plaque from forming on the teeth," says McPherson. There are also products you add to water that help prevent and reduce plaque from sticking to teeth.

Talk to your vet about your pet's dental health.

–By Ylva Van Buuren

HOW TO BRUSH YOUR PET'S TEETH

Hold a pet toothbrush covered in pet toothpaste in one hand and with the other, hold the pet's mouth closed. Gently brush the outside of teeth in an up-and-down motion. Don't worry about the inside surfaces of teeth as little plaque builds there.

BY THE NUMBERS A dog has 42 permanent teeth while a cat has 28.

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with wholesome ingredients like real chicken, flaxseed,
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HEALTHY DOG

YOU LOVE YOUR DOG AND ONLY WANT THE BEST FOR HIM

Here's how to keep him happy and healthy.

VISIT THE VET

High-quality veterinary care is the key to your dog's overall health. Talk to your vet about recommended vaccines, protection from fleas and other parasites and any dietary concerns you have.

ONLY THE BEST FOOD

A healthy diet provides the nutrients and energy that your dog needs at every stage of life beginning with the high energy puppy months through to the less active senior years. What you feed your dog affects appearance (a dog's coat should always be shiny and free of flakes; and he should be a healthy weight) and disposition (he should have good energy and be content). Be sure fresh water is always available.

KEEP HIM ACTIVE

Just like people, dogs need regular exercise – in general, at least one to two hours every day. An under-exercised dog may start exhibiting unwanted behaviour such as chewing on furniture and carpets and separation anxiety.

TAKE CARE OF HIS TEETH

For healthy teeth, gums and breath, you can brush your dog's teeth, use oral rinses and feed them tartar-fighting dental treats. Your vet may recommend professional cleaning periodically too.

KEEP HIM GROOMED

Grooming needs are based on your dog's breed but in general an average short-haired dog should have a monthly nail trim, bath and brushing. Long-haired dogs should be brushed out daily.

LOVE

Dogs are like people really – they need food, water and love.

SERVING UP A HEALTHY & DELICIOUS DIET

IAMS produces several types of canned and dry dog food for all life stages of a pet's life – from puppyhood to their senior years (for example, as a dog gets older, he may need food that is easier to chew). For good health, IAMS uses natural ingredients including:

- High-quality protein from chicken or lamb for strong muscles
- Tailored Fiber blend including prebiotics and beet pulp for healthy digestion.
- Omega-fatty acids for healthy skin and coat.
- Enriched with antioxidants to help maintain a strong immune system.

Keep dogs playing strong with new Iams® Senior Plus.
NEW
Puppy 0 – 1
Adult 1 – 6
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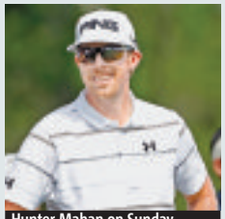
Senior Plus 11+
Iams Senior Plus for dogs 11 and older. With 2x the antioxidants,* it helps restore the immune response to that of a healthy adult dog and helps fight signs of aging.
*vs Iams Original or Iams Adult

Golf

Hunter on target at Houston Open



Hunter Mahan on Sunday. MATT SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES

Hunter Mahan shot a 1-under 71 on Sunday to win the Houston Open, edging Carl Pettersson by one stroke.

Mahan, who won the Match Play Championship in February, is the first two-time champion on the PGA Tour this year. The victory moved Mahan up to No. 4 in the world rankings, the first time he's ever been the highest-ranked American.

"That's a pretty surreal thing to think about," Mahan said. "It shows me what I can do, shows me what I'm capable of."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NASCAR

Newman gets win in wild finish

Ryan Newman needed help and was running out of time. Finally, Clint Bowyer provided an opening with two laps to go at Martinsville Speedway in Virginia.

Bowyer's aggressive move took out race leaders Jeff Gordon and Jimmie Johnson entering the first turn, allowing Newman to slide into the lead, and he held off A.J. Allmendinger and Dale Earnhardt Jr. on another restart for his first win in 23 races.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A different feeling for Howard in Switzerland

Curling. Canadian skip improves to 3-0 in front of low-key world championship crowds

Whether it's the rocking atmosphere of the Tim Hortons Brier or the relative serenity of the world men's curling championship, Canada skip Glenn Howard just keeps doing what he does best.

Winning — and doing it with remarkable consistency.

Howard picked up victories over Germany and the United States on Sunday to remain unbeaten at 3-0. The veteran Ontario skip lost only once en route to the national title last month and hasn't slowed down here in Switzerland in his pursuit of a fourth career world title.

The only differences have been the international opposition and the intensity of the crowds.

The Credit Union Centre in Saskatoon was a curling madhouse for the national championships. The St. Jakobshalle is like a library by comparison.

"It's sort of more like a club game," Howard said after his win in the morning draw. "You're out on the ice and you don't hear as much."

That's an understatement. It was so quiet during the morning game that banter between curlers could easily be heard from the stands.

The occasional cheer, the steady whirr of stones sliding down the ice and buzz from the brushers were essentially the only sounds in the rather cavernous 9,000-seat venue.

Official attendance figures weren't released but organizers estimated that 800 spectators were on hand in the morning. A manual head count revealed less than half that number.

Canada's Glenn Howard, right, and Germany's Felix Schulze watch a stone on Sunday in Basel, Switzerland. GEORGIOS KEFALAS/KEYSTONE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Swiss interest

Curling is in fact quite popular in Switzerland. The country boasts 160 clubs and 8,000 registered curlers.

- Switzerland has also picked up some impressive victories. Patrick Hurlimann won men's gold at the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano and Mirjam Ott won the women's world title last month.
- Armin Harder, the head of high performance with the Swiss Curling Association, expects attendance to pick up through the week.

At the midway point of the draw, there were 65 spectators on one side and 158 fans on the other. A total of 77 fans took in the action from the grandstand and 34 fans sat at the VIP tables.

Add it up for a grand total of 334 spectators.

To be fair, only two of the four sheets were in action, the host side was idle and the picturesque city of Basel was bathed in spring sunshine.

But when a similar draw was played last month at the women's world championships in Lethbridge — a two-game draw with the host side idle — more than 1,900 fans took in the action.

"We played in Saskatoon and the crowd was absolutely crazy," Howard said. "Obviously not so much for us but it was really loud and it does get the adrenalin pumping."

After opening the competition with a win over France, Howard crushed Germany's John Jahr 9-2 in six ends before edging American Heath McCormick 8-7 in the evening game.

Howard hit a draw to the four-foot in the 10th end to win it.

"You just divorce yourself from the outcome, just throw a quality curling shot and good things will happen," Howard said. "I was pleased. We played really well that game."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"It gets you excited, you get goose bumps when people are cheering and it definitely kind of gets you in the game a little bit."

Canadian skip Glenn Howard, on the contrast in attendance between the world championships in Switzerland and last month's Brier in Saskatoon.

Soccer. Brazilian dies in another act of fan violence

A soccer fan was killed in a fight between rival groups in central Brazil on Sunday, the fourth fatality resulting from fan violence in less than a month.

Authorities said Sunday that 23-year-old Diego Rodrigo Costa de Jesus died after being shot in the back during a confrontation between supporters from Goias and Vila Nova in the central city of Goiania on Saturday.

Two Palmeiras fans were killed last week in a fight in Sao Paulo, and a Guarani supporter died about two weeks ago about 100 kilometres away.

A series of incidents related to fan fighting at the beginning of 2012 had raised concerns with Brazil hosting the 2014 World Cup. Fan violence had appeared to be mostly under control in the past few years but the recent surge has authorities scrambling to find solutions. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Upswing in violence

Sunday's death occurred in the same city where four Goias fans were wounded by gunshots in January.

- De Jesus was also a Goias supporter.

MLB

Mended Johan Santana is Mets opening day starter

After a spring full of injury-related news, finally some relief for the New York Mets: Johan Santana will start on opening day.

The left-hander, returning from shoulder surgery performed in September 2010, met with manager Terry Collins Sunday. Collins announced Santana was set to pitch against the Atlanta Braves.

"It means that everything we've done from surgery to today has paid off," Santana said.

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ATP tennis. Djokovic continues dominant run

Top-ranked Novak Djokovic won his third Sony Ericsson Open title Sunday, holding every service game to beat Andy Murray 6-1, 7-6 (5) in Key Biscayne, Fla.

Djokovic also won in 2007 and last year. Only six-time champion Andre Agassi won more men's titles.

Djokovic didn't lose a set in six rounds, and saved 25 of 30 break points against him.

"I had a great tournament," Djokovic said. "I managed to play my best tennis when I needed to."

He improved to 20-2 this year and 90-8 since the start of 2011. He has won five Grand Slam titles, including the past three in a row.

Now begins the clay season culminating with the French Open, the only major even Djokovic has yet to win.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Novak Djokovic celebrates on Sunday. MATTHEW STOCKMAN/GETTY IMAGES

4 SPORTS

Quoted

"Of course if I keep skating well and keep getting the same results that I had this season, I'm going to go into the Olympics with the same expectations, like I should live up to (the expectation of) winning the Olympics. ... Now I have a little taste of it and know how to deal with it."

Canada's Patrick Chan after winning gold on Saturday at the world figure skating championships in Nice, France. The fact the 21-year-old triumphed over competition he called the most difficult of his career is both a major victory and a huge lesson learned, he said, less than two years away from the 2014 Sochi Olympics.

On the web

The Canadian women's hockey team is looking to reclaim gold-medal glory in Vermont this week at the world hockey championship after a heartbreaking overtime loss to the U.S. in last year's final in Zurich. The roster, named Sunday, includes 13 players from the 2010 Olympic team that defeated the Americans 2-0 for gold in Vancouver. Scan the code for the story

Rematch for national glory

NCAA. Facing Kansas in championship game is nothing new for Kentucky coach Calipari

Well, this matchup is going to look familiar.

John Calipari and his Kentucky juggernaut will face Kansas for the national championship on Monday night. That would be the same school that beat Memphis in overtime for the NCAA title in 2008, back when Calipari was coaching the Tigers.

It also would be the same Kansas team that the Wildcats beat back in November.

"We're worried about us playing at our best," Calipari said after Kentucky held off pesky Louisville 69-61 in the first semifinal Saturday. "We did not play at our best tonight. We played good, but that wasn't our best.... So maybe Monday is our best. We're just worried about us."

Top-seeded Kentucky (37-2) is back in the title game for the first time since 1998, when it won its seventh NCAA championship.

Down 13 in the first half, resilient Kansas (32-6) needed a furious comeback against Ohio State to reach the championship game, where it will play for its fourth NCAA title.

"It's a dream to play the best team in the country, who is up until now, hands down, the most consistent," Kansas coach Bill Self said. "It's a thrill. And I think it's even more of a thrill for us, because I don't think anybody thought we could get here."

That 2008 squad Calipari had in Memphis was stocked with talent, led by future NBA MVP Derrick Rose. But the Tigers missed four free throws down the stretch and blew a late nine-point lead in an overtime loss to Mario Chalmers and the Jayhawks.

These Wildcats, however, are in a totally different class. Anthony Davis has won just about every player of the year award there is, and Louisville coach Rick Pitino likened him to Bill Russell after Saturday night's game.

The 19-year-old doesn't look like a freshman, and he doesn't play like one, recording his 20th double-double against Louisville with 18 points and 14 rebounds. He missed just one of his eight shots, and also had five blocks and a steal.

"Anthony Davis is as fine a basketball player as there is," Pitino said.

Then there are the rest of the Wildcats.

They shot a blistering 57 per cent Saturday and had two other players besides Davis in double figures. Darius Miller scored 13 points and Doron Lamb added 10. Michael Kidd-Gilchrist had nine in just 23 minutes due to foul trouble.

Few people would have expected the Jayhawks to seriously contend for a championship as they scuffled through the early part of the season. They were 7-3 midway through December and struggling to find an identity, but a team meeting helped Kansas find its focus, and the Jayhawks simply refuse to lose. They've lost just two games since Feb. 7, and keep eking out wins in the NCAA tournament.

"It's pretty cool to have the winningest program of all time and the second-winningest program of all time hooking up on Monday night," Self said.

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Celebrate with fire

Riot police used pepper spray in small amounts for crowd control as thousands of rowdy fans swarmed into the streets near the University of Kentucky campus, overturning cars and lighting couches ablaze after a victory over cross-state rival Louisville in a Final Four matchup.

- Lexington police spokeswoman Sherelle Roberts said 150 officers deployed on the streets at one point to quell what she called "a very dangerous situation with the fires and the violence" that dragged on for hours.

Anthony Davis of Kentucky celebrates the Wildcats' 69-61 win over Louisville on Saturday in New Orleans. RONALD MARTINEZ/GETTY IMAGES FILE

Travis Releford celebrates the Kansas Jayhawks 64-62 win over Ohio State on Saturday in New Orleans. JEFF GROSS/GETTY IMAGES FILE

Quoted

"We kind of played on borrowed time a little bit, but I think it gives the guys confidence that no matter what, we're OK."

Elijah Johnson, Kansas Jayhawks guard.

Jays vow to give Toronto fans reason to cheer

Toronto's Jose Bautista bats against Atlanta earlier in spring training. AL MESSERSCHMIDT/GETTY IMAGES

Jose Bautista didn't hear the cries of disgruntled Maple Leafs fans, who in the midst of another demoralizing loss called out for his team.

But when told of what happened at the Air Canada Centre on Thursday night — and after making clear he takes no joy in the suffering of Leafs Nation — Bautista said Toronto sports fans should be excited about his Blue Jays.

"They have good reason to be feeling that way," he said, matter-of-factly, while sitting at his locker in the back corner of the Dunedin, Fla., clubhouse he will leave behind on Tuesday. "We can compete against any team, and we can't wait to get going."

Optimism abounds at spring training. Across Florida and Arizona, every major-league ball club is making claims that 2012 will be their year.

But there is a distinct buzz about these Blue Jays, both from within and without.

They are the fashionable choice for baseball pundits predicting American League surprises.

They set a club record for spring wins and have proven almost unbeatable this exhibition season.

As a team, they have a noticeable swagger.

"We're arrogant, we know we can win," said Ricky Romero, the left-handed ace of the team's pitching staff. "I hate watching the playoffs at home. I want to be part of it. The city of Toronto, I think, deserves it."

Judging from the anxious fans at the ACC, the city can't wait to welcome the boys of summer.

Brett Lawrie, the 22-year-old third baseman whose electric play in 43 games at the end of last season has fuelled much of the hype around the team, said he heard about the "Let's Go Blue Jays" cheers at Thursday's Leafs game on Twitter.

"I really think there is a big buzz going on right now in Canada and in Toronto," he said, "and we're definitely going to turn some heads for sure." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Spring training

Nate McLouth and Matt Hague homered and the Pittsburgh Pirates beat the Toronto Blue Jays 3-1 on Sunday.

- **Michael McKenry singled** before McLouth homered off Drew Carpenter with two outs in the eighth inning and sent it over the left field wall for a 2-1 lead.
- **Toronto starter Brandon Morrow** allowed two hits in four innings and struck out four.

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NHL

Sens clinch with win on the Island

No captain Daniel Alfredsson. No scoring leader Jason Spezza. No problem against the New York Islanders. Kyle Turris scored twice, Milan Michalek added his team-leading 35th goal and the Ottawa Senators clinched a playoff berth with a 5-1 win over the Islanders on Sunday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NHL

Flyers rally past Penguins

Jakub Voracek scored twice in the third period to break open a tight game and lift the Philadelphia Flyers to a 6-4 victory over the Pittsburgh Penguins on Sunday.

Wayne Simmonds, Claude Giroux, Max Talbot and Marc-Andre Bourdon also scored for the Flyers and Sergei Bobrovsky made 43 saves. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Philadelphia's Scott Hartnell hams it up Sunday in Pittsburgh. GENE J. PUSKAR/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IndyCar

Power wins again in Alabama

Will Power surged from the pack to win his second straight Indy Grand Prix of Alabama, once again holding off Scott Dixon.

Power started ninth but took the lead on a late caution and pulled back in front of Dixon on the double-file restart with 16 laps left Sunday in Birmingham. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NBA

Air Jordan has no plans to jump ship

Michael Jordan says he's 100 per cent committed to the Bobcats and has no intention of selling the team.

Charlotte have lost 12 of their last 14 and own the NBA's worst record (7-43), but Jordan says he isn't ready to bail on the team he became majority owner of in March 2010.

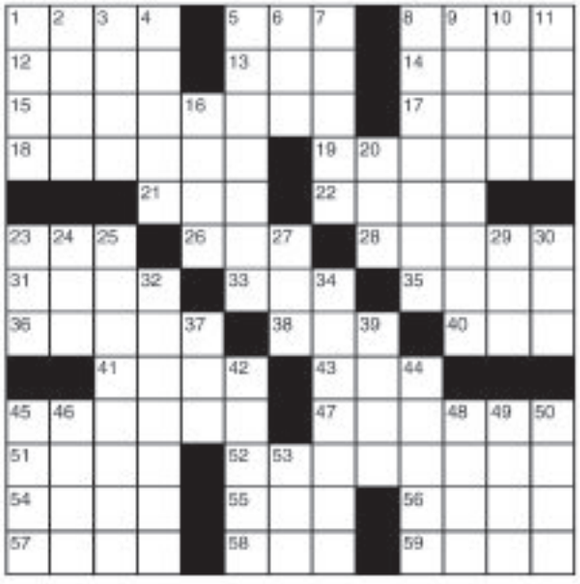
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NBA

"It is what it is and so hopefully I can come back as soon as I can and help everybody."

New York's Jeremy Lin who is heading for left knee surgery that is expected to sideline him six weeks, possibly ending his breakthrough season and leaving the Knicks without their starting point guard.

Crossword



Across

1 Air pollution
5 Shade provider
8 Mid-month date
12 Staffer
13 Grass-skirt accessory
14 Castle protector
15 Likely loser
17 Taj Mahal city
18 Rent payer
19 Much
21 Listener
22 Small combo
23 Mrs. O'Leary's troublemaker
26 Thickness
28 Coach Rockne
31 Quid pro quo
33 "Undeniably"
35 Birthright barterer
36 Prelude
38 Spigot
40 Blunder
41 Cornfield commentaries
43 Be a couch potato
45 For some time
47 Eagles' nests
51 Auction offers
52 Li'l Abner's hometown
54 Lotion additive
55 Before
56 Antitoxins
57 Pleads
58 Scarlet
59 Cockily confident

Down

1 Author Bellow
2 Greedy one's call
3 Probability
4 Gaggle members
5 On in years
6 Zodiac sign
7 Power
8 John Lennon song
9 Place of disfavor
10 "My Name Is —"
11 Remain
16 Harvest
20 Annoy
23 Marg Helgenberger series
24 "My — Private Idaho"
25 Guardian
27 Nevertheless
29 Pitch
30 A cont.
32 Lauds
34 Attacked brutally
37 Pussycat's partner
39 Incubator noise
42 Passover dinner
44 Lawn
45 Quatrain rhyme scheme
46 — E. Coyote
48 Particular
49 Beige
50 Rug type
53 Raw rock

For today's crossword answers and for expanded horoscopes, go to metronews.ca

Sudoku

9				7	4	1		3
3	7						8	
				3	6		4	
	3					5		
			2		9			
		5					6	
	6		1	4				
	1						7	8
2		9	7	8				5

How to play

Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Send a kiss

- **Sadiki.** I hope you get this message soon because i want everyone to know how much i love you and how i would be lost without you. You are my handsome prince. You understand me better than anyone and you challenge me each day to be a better person. We have been through so much together, but we have only become stronger. I know this year will be better. I love you more than anything with all my heart and soul. Your Cougarlizzy
- **Jonathan.** You've made falling in love with you easy, I look forward to continuing our story! Love, your Juliet xo
- You are stronger than you think. You have the power to make me weak. How do you do it? confused beshtiee!
- I did everything, expressed my feelings but in the end I feel like I didn't get anything accomplished. Through thick and thin I'm always there no matter how bad it is. I love you so much I know I told you a million times I really do. I'm just protecting you from all the stupidness that's around. I love you <3.. I'm Sorry.. sincerely, 625<3

Horoscope

Aries | March 21 - April 20. You don't have to make a big display of your emotions.

Taurus | April 21 - May 21. You must not allow other people, no matter how well meaning, to poke their noses into your affairs.

Gemini | May 22 - June 20. You may not have got as far with something as you would have liked over the past few weeks but the important thing is that you have made a start.

Cancer | June 21 - July 22. If you spend too much time weighing up the pros and cons of an offer today someone of a more instinctive nature could beat you to a prize that should have been yours.

Leo | July 23 - Aug. 22. A minor battle may hardly seem worth the effort today but it's good practice because soon you will have to fight for something a lot more important.

Virgo | Aug. 23 - Sept. 22. Don't dwell on the past today or you could miss out on a wonderful future.

Libra | Sept. 23 - Oct. 22. Your rivals and enemies are not as tough as they look.

Scorpio | Oct. 23 - Nov. 21. Don't let other people drag you down with their negative attitudes today.

Sagittarius | Nov. 22 - Dec. 21. According to the planets a friend or relative has something important to reveal, but they may be reluctant to bring up the subject. Be patient and encourage them to tell what they know.

Capricorn | Dec. 22 - Jan 20. You like a challenge but that is no reason to make life hard for yourself.

Aquarius | Jan. 21 - Feb 18. Don't concern yourself too much with what other people say or do today. Put on your smiley face and don't let anyone or anything get you down.

Pisces | Feb. 19 - March 20. A little bit of humour will go a long way today, especially if you have been too serious of late.

SALLY BROMPTON

Caption Contest

"Are you sure you don't want me to use a nail clipper?"
Erica

FRANK AUGSTEIN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Win!

You write it!

Write a funny caption for the image above and send it to play@metronews.ca — the winning caption will be published in tomorrow's Metro.

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